

COUNTRY LIFE

THE JOURNAL FOR ALL INTERESTED IN
COUNTRY LIFE AND COUNTRY PURSUITS. **ILLUSTRATED.**

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THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Our Frontispiece. Mrs. Jardine	449, 456
Weather-Wisdom	450
Country Notes	451
Signor Marconi. (Illustrated)	453
The Psychological Moment in Shooting	453
Polo: The Springhill Sale	453
Animals in Church	454
The Elton Beagles. (Illustrated)	454
On the Green	455
Spring Rabbit Catching. (Illustrated)	455
Literary Notes	456
Prairie Dogs as Pets. (Illustrated)	457
Norman Castles in Wales. (Illustrated)	458
Osiers and Willows. (Illustrated)	459
Kennel Notes. (Illustrated)	461
In the Garden	462
In Constable's Country. (Illustrated)	463
Gardens Old and New: Bramshill.—II. (Illustrated)	464
Books of the Day	467
A Day's Stalking on Antimilo. (Illustrated)	468
Derelict Race-courses. (Illustrated)	469
Houses for People with Hobbies: A River-side Mansion. (Illustrated)	470
An Artisan's Pack. (Illustrated)	472
Notes for the Table: Some Suggestions for a Pocket Luncheon	474
Cycling Notes	474
In Town: "The Tyranny of Tears"	475
Dramatic Notes	476
O'er Field and Furrow. (Illustrated)	476
Racing Notes	478
Between the Flags	478
Correspondence	479
Cattle at the Ford. (Illustrated)	480

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WEATHER-WISDOM.

THE wise men of several generations have said hard things of prophets. Cicero has expressed surprise that the Roman diviners—especially those that based their divinations on the flight of birds—could ever pass each other in the street without a mutual grin at human credulity. Bacon has said, of what he calls "Dreams and Predictions of Astrologie," "My Judgement is that they ought all to be *Despised*," and further he adds this very pregnant dictum on the matter: "That, that hath given them Grace, and some Credit, consisteth in three things. First, that men marke, when they hit, and never marke, when they misse." His second explanation of men's belief is that "Probable Conjectures many times turne themselves into Prophecies." The third, "and Last (which is the Great one), is that almost all of them, being infinite in Number, have beene Impostures, and by idle and craftie Braines merely contrived and faigned, after the Event Past."

Sheer fraud, in fact, says this wisest of mediæval men, is the biggest factor. Our weather prophets, however, we may perhaps generally acquit on this head. Bacon did not write in the days of a Press hungry for its daily "copy." The fraudulent prophet would certainly be exposed now. Nor would the weather prophet concern himself much with the second count in Bacon's indictment; he would plead guilty, drawing no fine distinction between Conjecture and Prophecy. But in regard to modern weather prophecy, the great truth is expressed in the first explanatory cause: "That men marke when the forecast comes true, but disregard it when it fails." That, I think we may take it, is the quality or weakness in the human mind by virtue of which the weather prophet continues to exist. For, by all logical argument, the weather of 1898 and the winter of 1898-99 should have driven every weather prophet in the country to put up his shutters and close shop. No public ought to make further demand for his spurious wares. But the public will. The country-folk will pin their faith on the particular weather almanack that has misguided them for generations, as firmly as of old, by reason, as Bacon again says, of "the Nature of Man, which coveteth Divination."

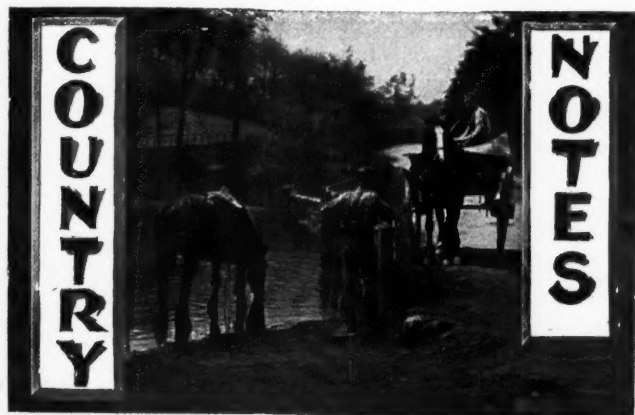
Of our modern weather prophets we have, of course, two classes—those that tell us what the weather is going to be some months ahead (are these, perchance, the "one-eyed almanacks" of Mr. Pecksniff, before Tom Pinch's mild correction?) and those that foretell the event by a day or two only. Of the two the latter class is infinitely more worthy of respect. Of the former our "Judgement" may be, with Bacon, "that they ought all to be *Despised*." The latter's methods and results deserve some little consideration before we settle to despise them utterly. The most eminent weather prophet of modern times is, without doubt, Mr. Jorrocks, speaking through the inspiration of his famous peacock, Gabriel Junk. The virtues of peacocks as weather prophets have been sung both before and since. A friend of the writer's—said friend living at Warwick—informed him that before a recent notable storm the peacocks at Warwick Castle were terribly clamorous for fully three days. On the other hand, the writer himself, happening to live for some years on the edge of St. James's Park, used to listen most carefully to the peacocks there, in the hope of connecting their calls with changes of weather, but never with any effect. Still it would be a sad thing if we were to part with our faith in our Junks. And then, again, there is the green woodpecker. This bird is said to laugh his "Ya-ha-ha" in different, more liquid, tones when rain is coming—so liquid that it has been thought he was saying "Rain, rain, rain," by some persons of gifted fancy. But one must have a special gift to detect the difference. In Dorsetshire they have a way of foretelling storms by the flight of rooks. When they are "pitch-falling," as they call it—playing at tumblers in the sky—then they say there is a storm coming; and it seems as if there was more in this than in most avine weather signs.

There is a firm belief, widely spread, that if you want to know what the weather is going to be, you should consult a sailor, or, failing him, a shepherd. This is a theory that some one probably evolved, *a priori*, seated in an armchair. In the writer's experience of sailors and shepherds (or at least of hill men in the persons of keepers and gillies) he has never found one that had any special gift for foretelling the weather. For one thing, the sailor's point of view is quite different from the landsman's. "Bad weather" to the sailor means wind, to the landsman it means rain. The sailor does not mind how much it rains. He likes rain because, in his own words, "It knocks down the wind." The landsman's way of looking at it is best expressed by his hope that the "wind will keep up and then it won't rain." And the shepherds and gillies are an unobservant race—speaking generally—they go their way without thinking. A cultivated man observes much more. The ideas of these people as to the operations of Nature's forces would be very funny, if we could get at them. Speaking of that singular freak of the weather that the sailors call "backing and filling," when the wind backs against the sun, a coasting sailor said to the writer: "The wind gets away to the south-west, and backs again to the south-east, meeting the sun, and there it is—rain!" As much as to say that the sun, knocking up against the cloud, squeezed water out of it as out of a sponge. That really was the way, in all probability, in which, dimly, the fellow figured the thing to himself. "And there it is—rain!" Can anything be more simple, more final?

The writer has only met one man whose observations on the weather were to be trusted above those of his fellows, and he either could not, or would not, give a hint as to his methods of inference. These are always the wisest men. Mr. Mullins, the water-finder, said he could not tell how it was he knew the water was there; he "felt it in his feet." This other, the weather-finder, did not go even that far. On a beautiful evening last summer we commented on the steady appearance of the weather. "D'y'e think so?" said he. "It'll be a wet day to-morrow." "Why," we said, "the glass is going up; it's been going up steadily for some time"; this prophet had a glass in his cottage. "Yes," said he again, "but

it looks just right for rain." That was all he would say—"It looks just right for rain." He would not explain the indications. Sure enough, the next was a pouring wet day. None of the other country-folk in the district had an inkling of the rain's coming. This man is a prophet among his own people. Even his mother-in-law says she "has never known him wrong." This is a fact, and these are her very words, and he is a man who does not live a wholly outdoor life. He is a jobbing carpenter. He is the one just prophet out of a host of false.

In all probability the seafowl, and by consequence the seafowlers, know something about coming weather. "A Son of the Marshes" says so, and one cannot lightly gainsay his experience and judgment; but for the rest the whole tribe of forecasters—as a tribe—are to be Baconially "*Despised*," with a big D. And yet the writer himself has to confess to one exception—to his own little idol, the jobbing carpenter. Probably each one of us will make his own exception too in favour of his own little idol, because of "the Nature of Man, which coveteth Divination." Let us, however, take heed to Bacon's most sapient admonition, and see that we do not "marke, when they hit, and never marke, when they misse"; for this will very surely save us out of the hands of many a false prophet.



LORD CROMER'S report on the financial position of the Soudan has attracted much attention. People here are never slow to recognise and admire such striking instances of governing ability as those shown in the story of British control in Egypt. This machinery, as at present managed, deals impartially with all sides of human interest, and some more particularly attractive to the readers of COUNTRY LIFE. Lord Cromer finds time, while managing new provinces, to take forethought for the preservation of rare birds, the fisheries, and the game of Egypt and the Soudan. He has established a Zoological Gardens at Cairo, and of these Captain Flower, the son of Sir William Flower, late director of the Natural History Museum, is manager. He has also arranged for a scientific investigation of the Nile fishes, like that recently carried out on the Congo, and is always ready to consider any practical and business-like suggestions for the preservation of game in the Soudan. Truly a great pro-Consul all round.

The Queen's new yacht is to be of truly imperial dimensions. Her displacement is 4,500 tons, or about three times that of the Victoria and Albert. The latter was built much on the lines of the old paddle-wheel steam frigates made for service in the Crimean War. She was, and is, a beautiful vessel, equipped and fitted not luxuriously, but in the "plain but good" style of the Queen's early days. All her boats were royal blue, varnished as smoothly as a carriage, and her chief outside ornament a golden cable, carved in wood, running all round the vessel. The great advance in size in the new yacht is significant not of increase of luxury but of the growth of the Empire and increased necessity for the monarch to visit "Over-seas England." She will be able to cross the Atlantic or make the voyage to India or the Cape with perfect safety and comfort for the person of the sovereign.

Railways are now able to point to ancient history and boast veterans of the road; but the rolling-stock outlives the employés, and the engine may be well and hearty long after the engine-driver has run into his final terminus. An old engine, called the Cornwall, brought a special train to London one day at the beginning of the year, and next day took back the Scotch express. This engine is nearly half a century old, and is almost the senior locomotive now running. She was built by the famous engineer, Trevithick, but has been a good deal altered, for the boiler was originally placed below the main axle. She had not been to London for twenty years until last February, but regularly takes the 45min. expresses from Liverpool to Manchester. It is not difficult to gather from this

of what excellent quality British workmanship was in the engineering shops—then quite a young business—fifty years ago.

We should like to have been able to cast the recording eye of a camera on that dinner that an entertainer lately gave at Cairo, where the guests sat on ottoman divans and ate, Arab fashion, of Arab dinners, with their European fingers! They say that it requires much practice to eat, with grace, Arab fashion. This is easily to be believed, and we think it is a point that the camera at the feast in question might have emphasised. However, the entertained appear to have enjoyed it hugely, which, after all, is the end of all entertainments, not always achieved. And they had a European dance and a European supper afterwards, so perhaps they were not to be pitied. Still, we regret the camera's absence.

Rats have always levied toll in kind on the human race. Blackmail cheerfully paid to rats is, however, something new to history and a tribute to their great abilities. They had established themselves under a shop in the Central Meat Market, and, according to the owner, "the way they used to pick and choose was dreadful." When two carcasses of mutton were available they would eat the prime Scotch and leave the South American. The best was hardly good enough for them, and they were cunning even beyond the cunning of market rats. So the owner resolved to make a treaty and pay blackmail, relying on the economic wisdom of rats. He gave them three square meals a day, with plenty of variety, in the hope that the rats would be appeased, and not eat mutton at night too. The menu was bread, fancy biscuit, potatoes, and sugar, and was laid near the rats' front door.

At first they used to come up furtively and carry it off to their holes. But now they come out regularly into the shop, where they were seen by a correspondent of the *Daily Mail* eating their luncheon on equal terms with their hosts. Their leader was an old grizzled rat who had lost an ear, and was probably looked up to as Osman Digna in the leading circles of the Khalifa's army, or the Artful Dodger in Fagin's school. He has become the "medium" between the high contracting parties, and sets an example to his own side by eating bread and biscuits out of the shopmen's fingers. The rats now behave exactly like other robber tribes when in receipt of blackmail, in that they drive off all intruders. "The other day," said one of the shopmen, "a strange rat got in among 'em, and you should have seen 'em chase him out. They ran him right out of the shop, in front of all of us, and I believe if he'd 'a' stayed they'd have killed him."

Further trial of wireless telegraphy only confirms the utility and success of the invention. During the awful gale which raged in the Channel last Saturday there was wind, hail, rain, snow, and a thunder-storm, with flashes of lightning. Yet the communication between the lightship on the Goodwins and Boulogne was not interrupted in the least, and messages between Boulogne and the South Foreland were received steadily through an atmosphere of blinding snow. What is even more striking is the fact that the operators at this side could make out the difference in touch between the dots and dashes sent by different hands on the other side. A new use for the Eiffel Tower and for its replicas at Blackpool and elsewhere is clearly suggested. They will become the terminal uprights of the wireless system, and the receiving stations for long-distance messages. We are not yet told whether the receiving wire need be vertical. If height is the only object, this can be obtained by carrying a sloping wire up the face of hills and mountains.

The Duke of York will this week have enjoyed samples of representative Irish sport. Punchestown Races on Tuesday and Wednesday, and Leopardstown Races on Friday and Saturday, will offer the best of the kind which Ireland affords. On Wednesday, the 19th, the Duke and Duchess will leave for Kilkenny, where the Duke is to have some fishing on the Blackwater. We hope that His Royal Highness may find means to give some encouragement to those who are trying to improve Irish fishing and shooting and to make them "national industries." The Duke of York is one of the keenest shots and fishermen in England, and his attention only needs drawing to this matter to secure his hearty goodwill and concurrence in any national measures of improvement.

By the kindness of Captain Pretymann, the Spring Field Trials of the Kennel Club were held at Orwell Park, near Ipswich. We propose to give some illustrations of this excellent and useful meeting shortly. Meantime the thanks of all those interested in the best representatives of the ancient race of pointers and setters are due to Captain Pretymann for putting his ground at the disposal of the competitors. The Orwell Park Estate, which he inherited from the late Colonel Tomline, is one of the best partridge shootings in East Suffolk, and any

number of birds will be found among the well-cultivated fields bounded by the river Orwell. It is worth noticing that in spring high cultivation, which makes the use of dogs of little account in Suffolk during the shooting season, offers no obstacles to the business of field trials. The birds lie in pairs all over the thickly-planted fields of winter-sown wheat, and give excellent chances to the dogs to distinguish themselves according to rule.

Has there ever been a team going out to the Colonies that has returned with such a record as Lord Hawke is going to bring home with him? We question it. No doubt he has a strong, useful side, but it is not a "red-hot" side. But its members have the inestimable advantage over the teams they have been meeting, of being in constant hard practice and constant practice together. Everything in the cricket way seems to be "booming." The M.C.C. has a record list of fixtures, and "W. G." is practically in London. It is said that he will still help Gloucestershire now and then. Gloucestershire, by the way, has a wonderfully good financial position as revealed at the last county meeting—nearly £3,000 in hand. And Prince Ranjitsinhji is here, and the Australians are on their way. All that we need is that Jupiter Pluvius should be considerate. With that condition granted, our cricket season should be a marvel.

Our football teams that have gone abroad on the Continent seem too strong for their opponents, whether in France or Germany, at Rugby or at Association. Perhaps this was only to be expected. Not contrary to expectation either is it that we find the papers commenting on the game as an illustration of the brutal pastimes that are beloved by Britons. It may be the sting of defeat that sharpens this criticism. But what is not altogether in accord with anticipation is that this criticism comes from Vienna, German—Teuton, at all events—rather than French. We should have expected the criticism from a Latin race. The Latin races are not averse to the blood-shedding of the bull-ring or the duel with small swords, but they do not love hard knocks and bruises. We had not thought we should find this distaste in a Teutonic people. But, after all, it is possible that the papers may not echo the people's true voice. It is sometimes so.

The spring salmon fishing has been very disappointing. It has been the more disappointing because there was promise of very good things. Water had been so big that it had given fish every chance to run up, and no doubt very many fish did run up, so that there is every reason to hope that the rivers are well stocked now, and that we have a "good time coming." But its coming is so long deferred. Either there has been no water, or there has been flood, or there has been great cold and melting snow in the water—which influences, one and all, are in the angler's and even in the net-fisher's disfavour. The Tay has perhaps done the best of the rivers. The other great rivers—Tweed, Spey, what you will—have all done poorly; and the tale of the Irish rivers is much the same—there has been no fishing them.

The cold weather has been as much against the trout-fisher as the "in and out" kind of weather has been against both his and the salmon-fisher's interest. There has been next to no fly on the water. What fly, indeed, would hatch out for its little day at such temperatures? Yet the blue upright, beloved of the Devonian angler, has accounted for some fish on the western streams, and Major Cumberland, equally good at big game and at trout, has surprised some good fish napping at Frome. On these club waters it is a great thing to get at your fish early, before other members—who perhaps cannot catch them—have yet fished well enough to frighten them.

Old Father Thames is moving with the times and advertising himself bravely as a sporting river—a salmon and trout holding river—in *esse* or in *posse*. He was in the *Nineteenth Century* last month, and this month he has got himself talked about in *Blackwood*—*Edinburgh Blackwood*! The article is charmingly written, and written with knowledge as well as charm. Even we, in our little way, have written him up in our notes now and again. Why should he not be a sporting river? Meanwhile the Thames trout have not done great things as yet this year. The indefatigable and ever-successful Mr. Gomm appears to have done the best of them, but even his best is not up to his average. But what we want to see are Thames trout caught with the fly.

There is a beautiful story that really should have a little wider circulation, contributed by a correspondent to the weekly paper *Golf*. It befel, on the course of Norbury, that a golfer going to play his second shot found a sixpence teed upon his ball! That is the story. A friend to whom we told it at once sent in his name as a candidate for the club, and now tells us that the

club is besieged by applications for membership and has a waiting list longer than any other in the kingdom. No wonder!

We understand that very fair prices have been realised for the horses on show at the annual exhibition in the Champ de Mars. There were those that prophesied sad things about the sale of horses in France, since that enterprising country has taken to the automobile with an adaptability that the Briton does not number among his qualities. The entries, it is true, were less, considerably less, than in some former years; but probably prices are a truer criterion of the demand for horse-flesh than the entries. So they need not yet, even in France, boil down their last horse to make oil for motors.

We all who are bird lovers will read with gratitude Mr. Sydney Buxton's letter in the *Times* of April 8th, telling us the story of his engineering through Parliament an Act for the special protection of the sand-grouse as long as ten years ago. It was then too late. The door was shut after the grouse had been taken, with wrung necks, through it. All the members of the immigration of 1888, it appears, perished. But Mr. Buxton's Bill, aimed at their protection, has been passed into law and continued in force, virtually without a sand-grouse to take benefit under it, all the years between; and now this little lot that has been gracious and trustful enough to visit us again, according to Mr. Cordeaux's previous letter in the *Times*, will have the benefit of Mr. Buxton's legislative work, provided only that the County Councils do their duty in abetting it, as there is no reason to doubt they will. It is gratifying to all of us, and must be especially gratifying to Mr. Buxton, that his work is now—even thus late—to bear fruit. In the nature of things there is no apparent reason why Pallas's sand-grouse should not have a place among British birds.

There seems to be no chance that agricultural reform will figure much in Parliament during the present Session. The new Agricultural Holdings Bill has not yet put in an appearance, nor can it truthfully be said that there is any very urgent demand for it. The Adulteration Bill will need very careful watching by the agricultural members of the House of Commons. The interests to which it is opposed are very numerous and very powerful. The traders are already watching the Bill with a very critical eye, and their watching may be very easily turned into active hostility should there be any attempt to make the Bill really effective. The pressure of foreign importation of food is daily becoming stronger. Grazing has practically paid nothing for two years. Dairying has become a very precarious business. The least that Parliament can do is to insist upon the purchaser knowing the fact when he is buying foreign produce, and to see that he is not put off with American beef for prime Scotch, or margarine for best Dorset, or American Cheddar for that of Somerset.

The most remarkable fact in connection with British agriculture is the great increase in fruit and flower growing. In South Lincolnshire this has become an industry of the first importance. Just now tons of flowers, such as daffodils, narcissus, and jonquils, are being sent to the great Northern markets and London. Tomatoes, too, are growing largely under glass, and, curiously enough, the local taste for them has so increased that a large portion of the output is consumed in the district. Many thousands of acres of potatoes are grown on these deep alluvial soils. The first year has been a particularly good one for these. Many farmers have made as much of their potato crop as amounts to the value of the fee-simple of the soil. Several new varieties have lately been introduced, such as the British Queen and the Main Crop. In one case a farmer is said to have sold a field of British Queens at £85 per acre.

In spite of frosts and cold winds, the country is now looking very well indeed. The wheat crop is luxuriant—almost too luxuriant on some of the best soils. On the other hand, on poor and ill-drained lands ominous patches of yellow are to be seen. Prices are wretched in the extreme, and seem to be tending lower still. The spring-sown crops are already showing above the ground. The rainfall is still very deficient, and there is a good deal of anxiety as to the position of ponds and wells in face of the coming summer.

Old pewter plates now fetch a good price. A set, dated 1749, was sold recently at Sotheby's for 15 guineas, and another set last year for £21. The pewter plate lingered late at Oxford, where it was regularly used in the college halls at dinner in the fifties. It had the advantage of never breaking, and kept hot longer than china. But unless well cleaned, there was often a suspicion that the metal carried a taste of previous contents with it, and undergraduates objected and asked for china dinner-plates instead. As these were also easier for the servants to clean, pewter platters disappeared even from the conservative college kitchen and buttery.

The present lament of the farmers, that there is no one left in the villages for surplus labour, is really wholesome evidence of the elasticity of the English labouring class. We wonder where else in the world, or at what date, could such an enormous reduction in the labour employed on the greatest industry of a nation have been accompanied by so little real suffering to the workers, or so slight a disturbance to the wage-earners of the State? In the great depression after the Napoleonic Wars, when the farmers could no longer get enough for corn and cattle to pay their rents, these very farmers and their landlords had to maintain *on the spot* almost every man who was out of work. Poor-rates ate up all the income left to the landlords, and the suffering among the labourers, who were kept in the workhouses, or set to unremunerative work on the smallest pittance which would keep them alive, was naturally acute.

Our immense manufactures, and the chances for emigration or change of employment, have prevented a recurrence of these conditions, and now that agriculture is again moderately prosperous, we make no doubt that the younger children of those who have remained in the villages will stay and fill up the gaps as required. Farms do not come into cultivation in a day, and by the time that more labour is wanted the village offspring, always plentiful, will supply it amply.

Signor Marconi.

IF we are not much mistaken, the inventor whose portrait is herewith given has made a practical discovery second only in value to that of the telephone, and possibly of greater service to the future than the telephone itself. Wireless



telegraphy is in its results so like natural magic, that it is almost too simple for description. Several enquirers have already shown that vibrations of ether, caused by the electric spark, are transmitted through space, and affect certain substances which are sensitive to these vibrations at a distance. But what Signor Marconi has done is to make a working success of this discovery. He has found that if a wire is set upright it receives the vibrations caused

by the electrical spark, and that the distance from which it can be affected varies in proportion to the height of the wire. The result is that a wire carried up to the top of the North Foreland Lighthouse can receive a message sent from the other side of the Channel as clearly, and allow it to be read as easily, as if it were attached to a wire laid under the sea. The discovery is already in working order, and is a fitting close to a century of the greatest mechanical progress since the beginning of civilisation. Our illustration is from a photograph by H. S. Mendelssohn, of Pembroke Crescent, W.

The Psychological Moment . . . in Shooting.

THERE are those who say that a sportsman should wait for the psychological moment before shooting. It is unsatisfying to declare that a man cannot shoot. We know too well the significance of this simple phrase, but we like our facts decorated with metaphysical embroidery and our vulgar defects made dignified with grandiloquent titles. The psychological moment has to be seized by the much-discussed shooter, or his bag will show small. He will be no good at live birds, and inanimate bird clubs will give him high handicap points because he cannot "shoot for nuts." Variability in shooting has succumbed to the new fashion, and is now to be analysed to its core, chased to its innermost recess, pinned down, and subjected to a microscopical inquest. At all times a man cannot eat, sleep always, for ever drink and be gay. A plain mind is satisfied with this simple statement, and, although you may hunt down and put in a glass case the psychological reason of

this ever-recurring and certain phenomenon, one shall still go off his gaiety, his drink, his food, and his sleep.

Let us suppose a crack shot misses in one of these off moments—that is, when he is under his unpsychological or evil star. What are we to say? He is shooting badly? Oh no. That is far too clear, and far from satisfying, and we must carefully examine the underlying psychological causes. It won't make any difference to his shooting, his periods of "bad form" will recur just the same. They may appear spasmodic, but to the modern mind, which probes beneath the surface, they will be found subject to and controlled by laws as sure and unvarying as the cosmogonic forces governing the comets. Some mental disturbance is doubtless at work. An ingenious writer ascribes it to worry. It is very probable, but it may be other things.

Nevertheless, this fashion of sifting, probing, and analysing may have its good side after all. The gun-maker, who has been badgered into try-guns and shooting schools, who is fast losing his legitimate position of expert and maker of guns to become a quack instructor of bad shots, will rejoice that a polite and courteous way has been found for him to inform his complaining patron that he is a duffer. Of course he will not suggest worry, nor pour the distilled utterance of his angry soul over his esteemed client. He will say benignly, "You can't hit anything with it, you say, sir? Well, sir, if I were you I shouldn't take it to heart, but wait for my psychological moment." Thus will he keep his client, and save himself a world of trouble. It is, however, sad to think of the patience some sportsmen will need before that moment arrives. But, nevertheless, it is a pleasing thought that the vendor of guns, with whom we have much sympathy, can now at this length of time speak the truth without fear of losing a profitable customer through a suspicion of cavalier treatment. On the other hand, does the sportsman benefit by this probing of the psychological attributes? Will he expect the gun-maker to keep a medical adviser at his try-ground in order to get his visitors into physical training before they attempt the trying novitiate? Will he demand a phrenological disquisition as part of the benefits included in his guinea for tuition?

At all events, guns will still be made that do not fit, ammunition will vary. Duffers there will always be who will stick in helpless mediocrity, and first-rate shots too who, come what may, will at times shoot worse than the worst duffer, only to rise again and excel their own finest performances. Too often it must be conceded the fault is behind the gun, and because the weapon is dumb and cannot speak, the hard names with which it is loaded by the duffer are not resented. Let us not account as truth this talk of psychology, lately heard, comfortable though the theory may be for the duffer. The solution of good shooting lies in a good gun, a good man behind it, and a cheerful love of sport for its own sake. If one should fall from his true form, do not let him vex his mind with harassing hunts after unsatisfying reasons, and the old form, the steady nerve and the eagerness of spirit, in which he is sure to kill, will return all the quicker.

While learning all about the manufacture and mechanism of guns and ammunition, one may, of course, sometimes have to take into account the condition of the more intricate and wonderful human machine behind them all, without the aid of which shot-guns were mere lumps of metal. That human machine is not always in the same state of perfection—it has its good times and its bad; but with the good shot the former altogether predominate, with the bad one they are seldom seen. Even the crack shot has to avoid all nervous or other disturbance of his strongly-fashioned frame, which has helped him so greatly to build up his reputation on the moors and in the coverts. He has never to wait for the psychological moment, because he is always up to shooting pitch; he enjoys the benefit of a sound mind in a sound body. We fancy it is the hard-driven city shooter, who has to seek about for his best moments; his worst come through late hours and business worries. Psychology may be some solace to his mind, perplexed by his inability to shoot. If so we should not like to deprive him of such meagre consolation for a series of misses. His nervous system is weak and low-pitched, and his optic nerves suffer with others. He has, perhaps, some excuse for waiting for the psychological moment before he essays shooting. But he is the exception that only proves the rule—that the less the good, steady shot concerns his head with psychology the better for his shooting.

PTARMIGAN.



THE SPRINGHILL SALE.

PROBABLY there was never a new polo season which opened with more "go," and amidst more signs of increasing prosperity, than the present.

At any rate, I cannot remember one. From all parts of the country have I received intelligence of preparations for a fresh campaign—new clubs are springing up everywhere, half the men one meets are looking for polo ponies, and the general air of bustle in the polo world foretells an unusually busy season.

There is, in these days, no more certain sign that we are on the eve of a new polo campaign than the annual sale of the Messrs. E. D. and G. A. Miller's ponies at Springfield, and this came off on Saturday last, April 8th, with results which were, I hope, satisfactory to the owners. The weather was not calculated to inspire bidders with over-much dash, and bids came steadily by tens and twenties, rather than in the fifties and hundreds which were such a feature of last year's sale; but all the same, they came, and such a total as 8,555 guineas for thirty-four ponies, or an average of 251 guineas, was a distinctly satisfactory one, and proves more than anything else could do that the ponies sold there last year fulfilled the expectations of their purchasers, as I wrote in these columns at the time that they would.

This year's lot were fully described in these columns last week, and most of those who were specially mentioned in that article fetched big prices on Saturday last. The first lot put up was Attack, who made 700 guineas, whilst Florence, who succeeded him, went to 450 guineas before she changed hands. I doubt if their late owners could say which is the better of these two, but they are both as nearly perfect as possible, and no two such ponies have ever gone to auction before. The very smart brown mare J. W. made 400 guineas, as also did the good-looking galloping chestnut Queen Bess, and then 500 guineas had to be bid before the beautiful grey mare Pearl was knocked down to a new owner. Three

hundred guineas was the opening bid of the sale, and the first offer for Attack, and the same bid rang across the Springhill riding school when that grand six year old mare Policy was led into the ring. Only a first season pony, it is true, but she had been in the Messrs. Miller's hands for a whole year, and had a character; so the bids came fast and furious, and it was not until they had reached 750 guineas, the highest price of the day, that this beautiful mare changed hands.

After this, prices fell off somewhat, the six first season ponies, Angel, Reckless, Adela, Heiress, Secret, and Carte-de-Visite, all really good ponies, and easy to play, being very cheap indeed at 110 guineas, 120 guineas, 80 guineas, 80 guineas, 50 guineas, and 55 guineas respectively. It must always be remembered that these ponies are sold absolutely without reserve, and that their owners, so far from unduly puffing them, go out of their way, rather than otherwise, to tell intending purchasers of any faults they may have; and the fact that a few of them went for less than their value, as they certainly did, ought to encourage buyers who cannot afford to give big prices to attend these sales in future.

All the best-known polo regiments, the 1st and 2nd Life Guards, the Blues, the 7th and 13th Hussars, and the 12th Lancers, were represented at the sale, as were most of the London and provincial clubs, and many men had come long distances to see how the ponies which they had themselves sold to the Messrs. Miller at different times had turned out. It was a pity the weather was so bad, as the sale afternoon is now looked forward to as a popular social function in the neighbourhood of Rugby; but, all the same, men will not be stalled off buying what they want, when the wares are really good, and I most heartily congratulate the enterprising masters of Springhill on another so highly successful a sale.

OUTPOST.

ANIMALS IN CHURCH.

IN days not long past it was customary in many country churches to provide a separate pew for the accommodation of those four-footed members of the congregation who attended their masters to the place of worship on a Sunday; to-day, we believe, this custom has fallen into desuetude, and the presence of anything not human causes some confusion amongst the worshippers.

The bull in the china shop has become proverbial, but it is to be hoped that the bull in church will not follow suit, though the alarm in both cases is of pretty much the same magnitude. A bull the other day disturbed the congregation assembled at a week-day service at Arles-sur-Teché not a little; indeed, the women portion of the congregation screamed and fainted, whilst the priest vanished, and the male portion swarmed up the pillars or crept under the pews with remarkable despatch. The cause of the disturbance had an

engagement in the afternoon; he was to be the principal in a bull-fight, warranted to tax his strength to the utmost, so evidently determined to reserve himself for the fray, for after sniffing round and lying down in the aisle, he suffered himself to be led quietly away.

Of all the kingdom of birds, there is none that is so appreciative of the "odour of sanctity" as the robin, who not unfrequently attends Divine service, though, with the exception of an occasional pigeon at Westminster Abbey or St. Paul's, the bird world does not provide many regular church-goers by any means. Some few years ago a robin took up his abode near the Communion table in the Old Abbey at Bath, and remained there for some considerable time; his victualling department being presided over by a friendly vergier, he naturally had every inducement to remain, and remain he did. During sermon time, with the exception of an occasional chirp of approval, he preserved an exemplary silence, neither coughing nor yawning, but when the hymns were sung, and he perched himself on the Communion rail, his voice could be heard high above those of the human singers. All redbreasts, however, do not behave so well, and one at Ely Cathedral some time ago carried on in such a manner that, had he been caught "red-breasted," the local magistracy would have been justified in inflicting a fine for brawling. During the service he behaved fairly well, but when the clergyman ascended the pulpit and began to speak, the robin deliberately perched himself on an adjacent pinnacle of the chancel screen, and began to sing the most secular songs in his repertoire, and the louder the preacher spoke, the greater volume of sound proceeded from the irreligious bird, to—alas!—the intense amusement of the congregation, who can rarely control their risible faculties at such a juncture.

It is related that an undergraduate, called upon to read the Lessons after a very late night, confided to his friends afterwards that "if it hadn't been for the duck" he would have fallen down—the duck in question was the brazen eagle supporting the lectern. Ducks are not often met in church, but quite a number of the race, with brazen effrontery, though not themselves of brass, a year last August entered a church in a remote part of Anglesey, and paraded the aisle, uttering loud and continuous quacks which did not cover the mirth of the onlookers.

A plague of mosquitoes in America last year brought a sermon to a rapid close by the minister being stung in the mouth, and a colony of bats, by taking possession of a Presbyterian chapel, prevented any service being held at all; a similar occurrence to the former instance—but without the sting—abbreviated morning service one June Sunday at Felmersham, Bedfordshire, though in this instance it was the appearance of a swarm of bees in church that caused the trouble and induced the vicar to use a shortened service and dispense with the sermon. Curiously enough, the congregation were not moved to mirth on this occasion, though several of them were moved to leave the edifice with all haste. One person was stung severely, and several others had more or less narrow escapes.

THE ETON BEAGLES.



Hills and Saunders.

THE OFFICIALS OF THE ETON COLLEGE HUNT.

Copyright

THERE are few packs of hounds which bring back happier recollections than the Eton Beagles. How many men who have since won distinction as Masters of Hounds have gained their first knowledge of hunting as a science, apart from riding, by running after the game little hounds. There is no school of hunting to equal a pack of beagles, and the Eton and Christchurch packs have been great training schools for eminent sportsmen. So many of us have got our first ideas on the subject of the working of hounds from carrying

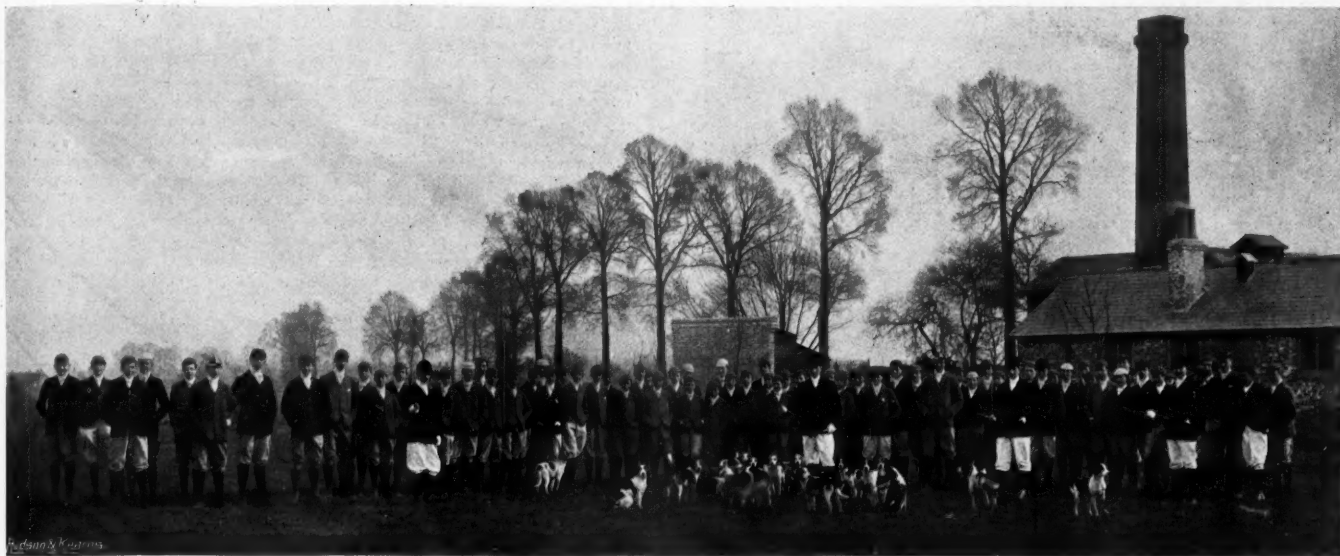
the horn or occupying the more humble post of whipper-in to them.

Of those who follow the beagles at our greatest and best school, there are two classes—those who already have the love of hounds and their work, and those who do so because a run with the beagles is a pleasant and useful way of putting in a certain amount of the work necessary for condition at other athletics. It is surprising the amount of work you can put in at a morning or afternoon run with beagles, without knowing

how much you have done. Thus beagles are a useful part of the athletic training of any school, for work done to the cheering sound of the music of the pack is a help against the staleness which all who have been in training know often arises from the monotony and weariness of the necessary work.

The Eton pack has survived many generations of headmasters, and some attempts at reform. Masters of the hunt naturally succeed one another quickly, but the little pack has a

Duhallow pack, and famous as a hound breeder, got his first taste for hounds at Eton. So enthusiastic was he that he kept a pack of his own, even while he was still a schoolboy, to run with in the holidays. The name of Beach, too, is familiar to hunting men in connection with beagles and foxhounds. It may be wondered whether the reason why so many Masters of Hounds come from Eton is that the taste for hunting is implanted in them at school by the College beagles. Lords Lonsdale and



Hills and Saunders.

A MEET AT THE KENNELS.

Copyright

good kennel huntsman; and though the present writer has not seen them for years, his younger friends tell him the pack has been improved, and that the hounds are of a modern stamp. But the Eton College pack must be looked upon as a training school for Masters of Hounds in the future, and these have been many.

The late Lord Doneraile, one of the best-known men in the Belvoir country in his day, the Master in after years of the

Bathurst, Mr. Austen Mackenzie, Sir Gilbert Greenall, and, to go further back, Mr. Vincent Calmady, are all Eton men, and are but a few out of the many Masters of Hounds who have come from Eton.

With the toast of fox-hunting, that of "Floreat Etona" may well be coupled. Long too may the gallant little hounds give pleasure and instruction to the rising generation of English country gentlemen.



PLAY for the actors' annual golf championship generally seems to boil itself down into something like a duel between Mr. Rutland Barrington and Mr. Herbert Ross, for these two, with Mr. Fred Kerr, are probably the strongest of the acting contingent. This year Mr. Rutland Barrington was not in his best form, possibly owing to the trouble he had generously taken in getting up the competition. Mr. Herbert Ross proved a rather easy winner. Mr. Kerr either does not come on, or else, having entered, fails to play his part, as he can play it, in this scene.

Alec Herd was too strong for Jack White at Seaford. There is no reason whatever that White should not hold Herd on a course where he has the pull of being at home. Herd, we cannot doubt, is the stronger, other things being equal. But other things were not equal at Seaford, which is a strange green to Herd, whereas White is resident there. But Herd won by five holes on the thirty-six played. The men seem to have played the long game very equally. Then, by the accounts, it was White that generally had the advantage on the approach; but Herd took that advantage back, with a little bit of usury, in the putting—that is really just what we should have expected to be the story of the fight. Again and again we have seen White approaching wonderfully. Sometimes we have seen him putting very accurately, too, but as a rule Herd is a finer putter. There is none safer to hole in two, from any corner of the green. So that was how this match went, in the midst of villainous weather; but most of our weather lately has been villainous. That was a singular return from the North Devon Club at Westward Ho! on the last day of the Easter meeting, that is to say on the Friday—a day on which the cross-Channel service was much interrupted. The winning net score was 105—prodigious! The Sandwich people were lucky in getting the better part of their competitions finished before the worst of the weather came on. Mr. C. E. Hambro and Mr. Everard Martin Smith had a tie, at 81, for the best gross score of the meeting; and this is good work on Mr. Martin Smith's part, for he cannot generally reckon himself quite so strong a player as his brother-in-law, Mr. Hambro. With no points to give or receive he also won the handicap prize, Mr. Hambro being penalised two. Mr. Arnold Blyth, the other Sandwich crack, was not there, but up in the North, competing for the medal of the Honourable Company of Edinburgh Golfers at Muirfield; and competing to some good purpose, for though he did not quite win, he was second, gaining the silver medal, and beaten only by a stroke by Mr. J. E.

Laidlay, the ex-champion. At a stroke more—that is to say at 87, for 85 was Mr. Laidlay's winning return, and Mr. Blyth was 86—came another ex-champion, Mr. Leslie Balfour Melville; and at the same figure Mr. A. O. M. Mackenzie. The last-named promised, by his outgoing, to be an easy winner, for he went the first half in 37 strokes, by some points the best. Unluckily he took an eight to the eleventh hole. Yet, even so, most moderate play at the last and penultimate holes would have given him the medal; but he must needs take six and seven to them instead of four and five. Such is golf!

A good match, and a good performance on the younger player's part, was the halved game between J. Braid and P. Wynne at Mitcham. As at Seaford, the less famous player had the advantage of being at home; but, unlike the course of events at Seaford, Wynne was able to make use of his advantage. A halved match with Braid is equivalent to a victory on the part of a comparatively little-known man. We may remember that the first foundation-stone of Braid's fame was a halved match that he played at West Drayton with Taylor, who was then at the very top of his game. Since those days Braid has so asserted himself that it is scarcely less good work to halve a match with him.



THE unhappy rabbit does not get much "law" in the old-fashioned sense of the word, though legal disputes over the right to "take" or kill him are endless, since the Ground Game Act, with all its possibilities for mischief, became law. The coverts under that Act are exempt from its provisions, and the tenant farmer may not enter them in pursuit of ground game or authorise anyone else to do so. He is, however, able to recover damages for crops injured by rabbits in the coverts, and it is the fear of this which makes the owner or sporting tenant obliged to set his keeper to work, in the early spring after shooting is over, to kill down the bunnies in the already depleted coverts.

Some are netted, but every hole cannot be covered by the nets in large buries, so he has his gun handy as well. The scene in our illustration is IN A YORKSHIRE COVERT, not far from Wakefield. In this district of coal measures such woods as that shown are very common on the steep sides of the hills. There is mostly limestone or "millstone grit" a little below the



R. Robson. IN A YORKSHIRE COVERT. Copyright

surface, and when the rabbits get into the interstices of this underlying rock they are safe. The woods are mainly of wych elm, with a good number of silver birches, as shown here, and rather poor under cover. But before the operations here shown were enforced in spring there were always "part rabbits," i.e., a good stock of ground game, in these, and there are still plenty of partridges in many districts quite close to the collieries. We have known two guns get thirty-five brace close to one of the largest coal-pits in South Yorkshire.



IT is rather a shock to read that the Samoan house in which Robert Louis Stevenson wrote the "Vailima Letters" has fallen into the hands of a German. The failure to collect the £3,000 necessary for the purchase of the estate cannot, at the same time, be considered altogether surprising. Samoa is a long way off, as the difficulty of getting trustworthy news during the succession crisis has forcibly brought home to the British public. Barely one in a thousand admirers of Stevenson would ever have set eyes on Vailima, had it been acquired as a memorial of him, and yet the feeling of half-ownership must always be the chief incentive to participation in schemes for the buying of the home of a famous man. Had the house been situated in Edinburgh, double or treble the amount would, no doubt, have been forthcoming without difficulty. Fortunately, we may fairly assume that his native shrewdness will induce Herr Kunst, the happy possessor of Vailima, to make use of its associations for all they are worth, and that devout Stevensonians, should their pilgrimages take them as far as Samoa, will find the goods and chattels of the author of "The Master of Ballantrae" treated with due reverence.

The Stevenson letters, which are appearing month by month in *Scribner*, will no doubt, go far to console most of us for the loss of Vailima. His outpourings to his friend Mr. W. E. Henley, who by judicious negotiations with publishers was materially adding to Stevenson's livelihood, which are to be read in the last batch, give him quite at his best as a correspondent. He was beginning to find his literary feet; and, although ecstatic on occasions, evidently regarded his calling with proper seriousness. If he dilated on his Art, with a large A, it should be remembered that the inferior lady novelist and the interviewed actress had not then made that term their own, and thus hopelessly vulgarised it. The allusions, too, to Mr Meredith's "Evan Harrington" and "Harry Richmond" are interesting, because they explain the strong marks of Meredithian influence which are to be traced in "Prince Otto." The true Stevensonian should, on no account, miss the letters in *Scribner*. How far it behoves him to attend the sale of the master's minor works at Messrs. Sotheby's on the 27th, is a question

to be decided by the value of his time and the length of his purse. Many rarities, in the shape of an unpublished leaflet edition of "Kidnapped," a four-leaved pamphlet, "Black Canyon," and so forth, will be on view. Because the attraction of these little things is purely romantic it does not follow that the bidding will not be fast and furious.

The late J. F. Nisbet's posthumous work, "The Human Machine: An Inquiry into the Divinity of Human Faculty in its Bearings on Social Life, Religion, Education and Politics," which Mr. Grant Richards is to publish, had been in his brain for years. If conversations, held in the freedom of bachelor quarters at Staple Inn, are to be trusted, its tone will not be exactly orthodox. Mr. Nisbet belonged, indeed, to the "dour" type of Scottish philosopher that is apt to be carried away by its favourite theories. The over-elaboration of his thesis formed the chief defect in his able book, "The Insanity of Genius." The man was always studying and thinking, so far as his duties as dramatic critic of the *Times* and writer of "Our Handbook" in the *Referee* left him leisure. For a practised journalist he was a slow worker and he so ordered his life that work was his most engrossing interest. Personally, he was a kindly soul, decidedly modest, when the vast store of out-of-the-way information that he had accumulated was remembered, but his outlook on life was saturnine, and, somehow, he conveyed the idea that he did not much care when he had done with it.

Mr. Charles Williams, the well-known war-correspondent, being a hearty loud-voiced Irishman, is as unlike a self-contained Scotchman of Mr. Nesbet's kind as one man can be to another. He resembles the late dramatic critic of the *Times*, however, in being a hard worker. In the intervals of service abroad and at home, on behalf of the *Daily Chronicle*, he has found time to write a novel, "John Thaddeus Mackay," which Mr. Burleigh is to publish. Mr. Williams adventures into fiction rather late in life, but if a vigorous style, and a capacity for racy description, can carry him through, success should be his. He has another war-correspondent to keep him in countenance, namely, Mr. E. F. Knight, who, only the other day, worked up his experiences as seeker of buried treasure on the Island of Trinidad into a capital boys' story, entitled "A Dangerous Voyage."

The combination of literature with Government employment is often attempted, and methodical people like Anthony Trollope in the past and Mr. Austin Dobson in the present can bear the double burden. It has proved too heavy, however, for Mr. W. W. Jacobs, the author of "Many Cargoes," who has been compelled to retire from the Savings Bank Department of the Post Office on the score of ill-health. Let us hope that the loss of the public services will be the gain of the book-reading public. Mr. Jacobs could not well write a merrier work than "Many Cargoes," but with greater freedom and less responsibility he will, no doubt, give his pen more regular exercise. Dealings with the thrifty investor during the working hours of the day must exercise a paralysing effect on those other working hours which are, too often in such cases, stolen from sleep. Mr. Jacobs's first novel, as distinguished from his stories, is to appear in the *Strand Magazine*.

Mrs. Lynn Linton has found a congenial biographer in Mr. G. S. Layard, a contributor to journalism with a distinct turn of humour. He has asked owners of letters, newspaper cuttings, portraits, and other documentary pieces to send them to him at Lorraine Cottage, Malvern. Mr. Layard ought not to be discouraged in his efforts to produce an adequate life of the author of "The Girl of the Period." But some experiences of the results of this kind of advertisement have been saddening, notably in the case of the biographer of a celebrated statesman. "Did you get anything worth having?" he was asked. "No," was the prompt reply; "answers to dinner invitations, formal letters acknowledging the receipt of a book, extracts from speeches, and that sort of thing. The possessors of some of these relics abused me for keeping them too long; when the book appeared, I was again abused because they were not inserted." Still Mrs. Lynn Linton was a voluminous correspondent with a wide circle of acquaintances, so there is room for "finds." Her letters to Mr. Greenwood and Mr. Sidney Lowe, during their editorships of the *St. James's Gazette*, ought to be excellent reading.

Surprise, even regret, has been expressed that Dr. W. G. Grace should include "other sports" besides cricket in his forthcoming reminiscences. In the names of George Parr and Fuller Pilch, why? Was not "W. G." a noted athlete in his youth—a short-distance runner, who could show a clean pair of heels to many a sprinter who thought no small beer of himself, and, if we are not mistaken, an accomplished hurdler as well? Even to-day he conveys his bulky form between the wickets with a speed that "blows" many batsmen young enough to be his children. William Caffyn, an indispensable member of "All England" teams in the fifties and sixties, will also recount his feats with the willow and the leather (as the old cricket reporters used to phrase it) before many weeks are over. "Seventy, not out," is the veteran Surreyite's well-chosen title, and that span of years explains how it is that he, Stephenson, and their contemporaries have become long since the legendary heroes of cricket.

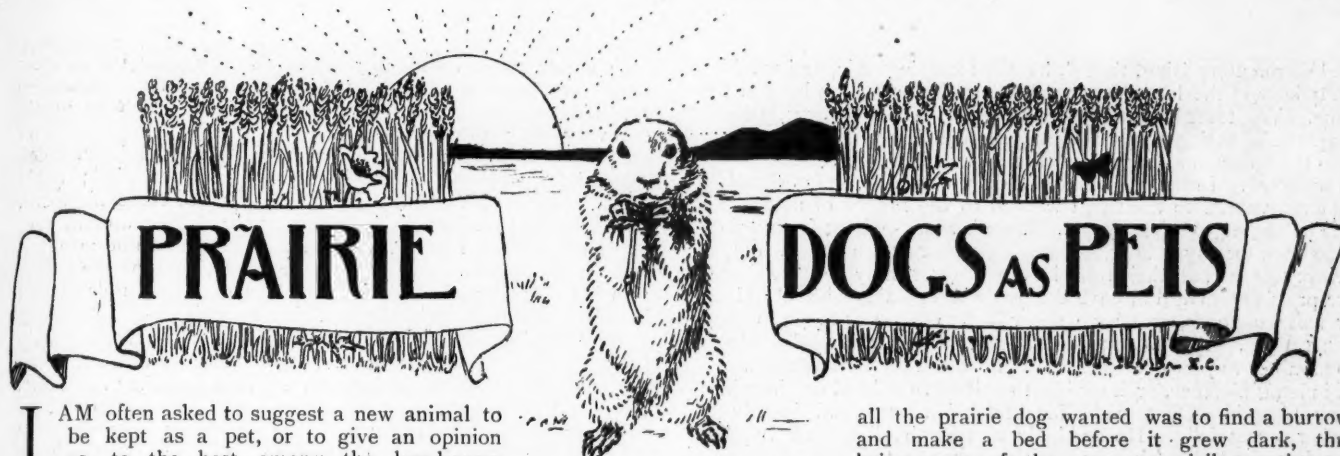
Messrs. Ward and Lock's reissue of Whyte-Melville's novels goes bravely on; a sign that good sporting fiction is still appreciated. "Black, but Comely," is the sixth and latest column.

Books to order from the library:—

- "The Philippines and Round About." Major G. J. Younghusband. (Macmillan.)
- "The Etchingham Letters." Ella Fuller-Maitland and Sir F. Pollock. (Smith and Elder.)
- "Solo Whist." C. J. Melrose. (Upcott Gill.)
- "The South Country Trout Streams." G. A. B. Dewar. (Lawrence and Bullen.)
- "Well, after all —." F. Frankfort More. (Hutchinson.)
- "A Millionaire's Daughter." Percy White. (Pearson.) LOOKER-ON.

Our Portrait Illustration.

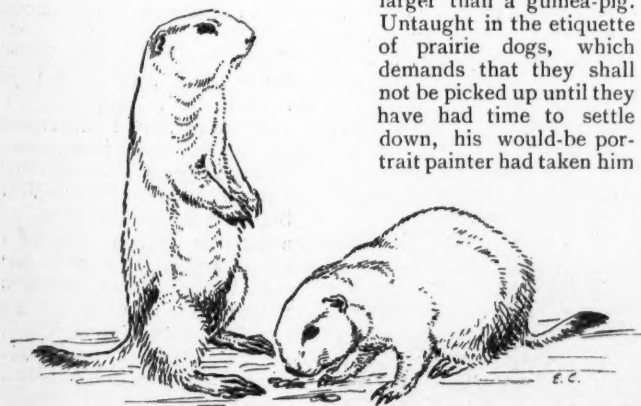
MRS. JARDINE, of Jardine, is the wife of Mr. D. J. Jardine, of Jardine Hall, Lockerbie, N.B., and Lauriston Hall, Roxburghshire, who is well known in racing circles. She is the daughter of the late Sir Charles Tilston Bright, M.P., one of the old Yorkshire stock whose family possessed as far back as 1509 Carsbrooke Castle, and Badsworth Hall, Yorkshire. Mr. D. J. Jardine's town house is in Park Lane.



I AM often asked to suggest a new animal to be kept as a pet, or to give an opinion as to the best among the less-known creatures which are at once pretty, amusing, clean, and companionable. The best, among pets as among other things, must always remain a matter of opinion; but no one will be likely to regret it if he becomes, as I was for a time, the owner of a prairie dog. Ours came in a box as a present from Mr. Jamrach. The servant who received him announced that it was a "rat or something alive," though why there should be such an inherent probability that "something alive" must be a rat I do not know. He was really only three-parts grown, though we did not know this, and any more self-respecting and sensible little animal, or less like a sneaking disreputable rat, I never saw. When he was let out of his box and turned loose in a large aviary with an earth floor, he sat up and barked at once, and then instantly began to dig a hole, so that he might be independent, and a householder. This regular backwoods instinct is characteristic of all prairie dogs, who are as composed, as full of resource, and as ready to make the best of things as any good American who ever set out to start for himself in the Great West in a prairie schooner. Our prairie dog was exactly like all his race, except that he was thinner, and not so Dutch-built behind, because he was only a prairie puppy and not yet grown to dog's estate. He was in colour sandy, like a Belgian hare, with large black eyes, short ears, a blunt head, very pretty little feet, which he could use like hands, though he had sharp claws—like a squirrel's feet, in fact—and a short tail. He rather resembled a fat, short-tailed, short-eared, big-headed squirrel, but was full of purpose, and not empty-headed like the squirrels, whose only mission in life, according to the old Norse legends, was to chatter, and to "carry the news" to other animals.

Mr. Jamrach had made us a present of this one so that his future mistress might paint his portrait. That young lady was naturally much delighted and excited by his arrival, and when I returned the next evening I expected to find a sketch begun. It appeared that the prairie dog had other views on this subject, and had prevailed. The instant he had dug his hole the night before, though it was only 6 in. deep, he had rushed out and bitten the toe of someone who had come too near—rather a

plucky assertion of its rights by a creature not larger than a guinea-pig. Untaught in the etiquette of prairie dogs, which demands that they shall not be picked up until they have had time to settle down, his would-be portrait painter had taken him



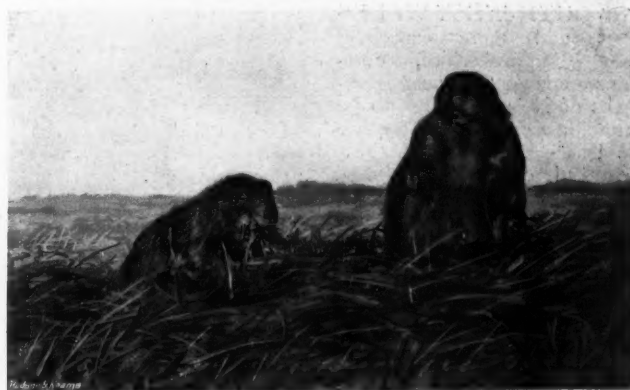
A SENTINEL PRAIRIE DOG.

up just as if he were a common guinea-pig. He instantly bit her finger, jumped down, ran to his hole, and barked cheerfully at the entrance. A prairie dog's bark seems quite involuntary. He sits up on end and gives himself a little jerk into the air, as if someone had tapped the floor under him, uttering a little wow-wow—with the accent on the second wow.

Taught by this bitter experience, his mistress made her next approaches far more cautiously, and the next evening I found the prairie dog sitting up before the fire, trying to stare her out of countenance, and looking (in the face) exactly like President Kruger stuffed. They were now great friends, and

all the prairie dog wanted was to find a burrow and make a bed before it grew dark, this being part of the necessary daily routine of prairie dogs, and one which causes them much thought and anxiety. His various expedients for making a bed or finding something which he could pretend was yesterday's bed and clear away, were among the minor amusements of our evenings at home, and the latter was of much service in showing up the weak places in our domestics' house-cleaning.

All heavy bits of furniture, like big sofas or bureaux, tend to accumulate "fluff" under them, or occasionally bits of paper, even in the best-regulated houses. The prairie puppy highly disapproved of this. He looked on these places as eligible sleeping quarters, and the little bits of paper or "fluff" as old



J. S. Bond.

GATHERING STRAW.

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bedding, which it was his duty to take out and throw away. About 5 p.m. he would, if in the dining-room, run under a large bureau. In a few seconds he would come out thoughtfully with a little roll of "fluff" in his mouth, take it to a distance of quite a yard from the bureau, and drop it on the carpet. Then subsiding on to all fours, he would gallop under the bureau again; next he would bring out a piece of paper and drop that; then a bit of fluff; then perhaps a pencil which had fallen behind the bureau. Having taken out and removed to a distance everything portable, he would come out, sit up on end and bark, and take a little afternoon tea before going back to make a bed.

He was so tame that he would scramble on to the lap of any lady or visitor, and allow his head to be stroked while he ate biscuit, held between his paws, or crammed little bits of lettuce into his mouth like a conjurer swallowing tape. Then he would gallop round the room to the waste-paper basket and earnestly endeavour to drag out bits of paper to take into the dining-room to make a new bed for the night.

Baffled in this purpose, for he was always caught and put to bed in a cage in the conservatory, he prospected the drawing-room furniture for a permanent home, and was so fortunate as to find one. Like all pets, he was constantly being lost, and was always found "in bed" in some place which took his fancy. On this occasion he had disappeared about five o'clock, and did not answer with his usual cheerful bark when whistled for. We concluded that he must be either unusually sound asleep, or have gone out of doors, in which case he would certainly be caught and eaten by a cat. Then someone sat down on a large deep spring sofa, when the prairie dog instantly barked from its interior. On turning over the sofa, we found that a piece of the covering underneath had been torn. This offered too good a chance for exploring to be missed, and the prairie dog had climbed in, and found a delightful cavern among all the spiral springs. We did not have the tear mended for some weeks, as we felt it rather a social distinction to have a sofa stuffed with prairie dog which barked when sat upon.

Taking his portrait was exhausting work, because the artist had to lie on the floor to draw him, and he would not sit still unless he was allowed to lie in the ashes under the grate, when his fur often got frizzled. Each day he grew more affectionate

and more enterprising, though he was most domestic, and would sit quietly in the lap of any of his friends for half-an-hour at a time. Whatever his occupation, he never omitted the prairie dog etiquette of sitting upright, like a sentinel, when anyone came into the room, and giving his little bark, half of warning, half of welcome. In the intervals of his search for a house for himself he endeavoured to accustom himself to the luxury of living in one belonging to other people. This is more difficult for prairie dogs than for any pets except seals or other creatures which are meant to spend all their time in the water, simply because they are prairie animals and have always lived on plains without hills, or trees, or rocks, and have never had to climb or to jump for generations. The consequence is that when a prairie dog tries to climb or to jump, he does so without having the least notion of judging distance, or knowing that if he tumbles down he will hurt himself. Ours made his first effort at broad jumping rather successfully. He suddenly cleared the distance between my knee and the table on which afternoon tea was set, and alighted exactly in the middle of a dish of sticky Oriental preserve which someone had opened to taste. After this great success he was always trying experiments in jumping, generally from a table to a chair, or *vice versa*; and being utterly unable to judge distance, he would only clear half the jump and then fall perpendicularly. Almost every climbing animal always falls on its feet, cats of course being the best-known performers. Prairie dogs,

which were never meant to jump or climb, always fall on their heads or noses; consequently the poor little fellow sometimes stunned himself, sometimes bruised his nose, which he would rub very sadly with his paws, and, worse than all, soon broke off all four of his front teeth. Visions of unfortunate rabbits which starved for want of their incisors came into our mind; but a most astonishing thing happened. All four of these big teeth, with which all rodents get their living, entirely grew up and were ready for use in a few days! And this happened not once, but three or four times. Of his further exploits, perhaps the oddest was his discovery that the broad hem of a lady's dress had become unsewn at the joining. This struck him as an interesting thing to explore, so he crept into the hem, and lay there quietly as long as she sat on her chair. When she rose she felt something heavy in the hem of her dress. This was the prairie dog. It was rather a tight fit, and he could not turn round, but we carefully drove him all round the dress by pinching him through the stuff until he came to the hole at which he had got in. He scrambled out, ran on to the hearth-rug, and barked as usual, quite unconcerned. His proper food was oats, carrot, lettuce, and a little milk; no water, and nothing very moist. In the absence of his mistress he was fed with moist food, and this it was, I fear, which killed him. Prairie dogs make excellent outdoor pets also, especially if they have a nice sandy place to burrow in.

C. J. CORNISH.

NORMAN CASTLES IN WALES.

SOUTH-WEST WALES and more especially, Pembrokeshire, contains some of the finest specimens of Norman ruins to be found anywhere. There are no less than seven of these beautiful old piles scattered about various portions of that district. To begin with, there is Pembroke Castle, on the banks of Milford Haven, in the ancient town of Pembroke, the birthplace of Henry II., and which in the reign of Charles I. sustained a terrible siege.

It has a circular keep of abnormal dimensions, 52ft. in diameter and 75ft. high, and its great walls are 14ft. thick. There is also a subterranean cave, measuring 77ft. by 57ft., called the "Vogan," and it is supposed that at one time the castle was connected by an underground passage with Roach Castle, which lies about six miles west of Haverfordwest.

The walls, as will be seen from the illustration, are clad with ivy, the growth of which is extremely thick in parts. From the top of the keep a splendid bird's-eye view of the surrounding district is obtainable.



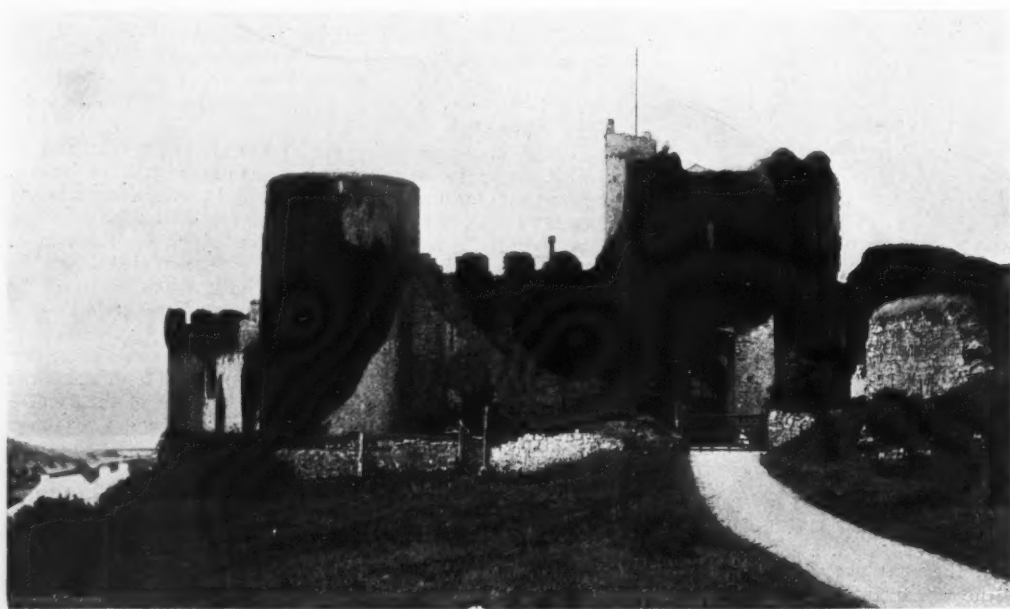
CAREW CASTLE.

Next in order of merit comes CAREW CASTLE, in the picturesque village of Carew (or Carey), and though it has no keep, it is, perhaps, from an architectural point of view, a trifle more ornate than the former, chiefly on account of a magnificent courtyard (or quadrangle).

Historically, too, it is interesting, having been garrisoned for Charles I. in the time of the Civil War, and in 1644 it was taken, and afterwards dismantled. It is supposed that the mansion was originally built in the reign of Henry VII., before which time it was merely a fortress, which from what remains of it appears to date back to the time of the Welsh princes.

The architecture is rich, Late Perpendicular, with large square lantern-like windows. There are also the remains of a very fine chapel, and one or two dungeons underneath.

Not more than three or four miles distant lies the castle of MANOBIER, which appears to have been built in the manner more of a convenient mansion than of a feudal fortress, and remains to-day very little altered from the original. It stands in a commanding position overlooking the sea, encircled by a moat, with a drawbridge and gateway, and



MANOBIER.

a lofty loop-holed embattled wall. It was built in the time of Henry I. by William de Barri, ancestor of Giraldus Cambrensis. A portion of it, which has been restored, is now used as a private residence.

Then in the adjoining county of Carmarthen we have KIDWELLY CASTLE, situated close to the somewhat remote old-fashioned town of Kidwelly. This castle was built in 1113 by William de Londres, and afterwards taken by Griffith ap Rhys, in 1190; then rebuilt by Griffith, son of Llewellyn, whence it passed to the Duchy of Lancaster; then given by Henry VII. to Sir Rhys ap Thomas, passed to the Vaughan family, and now belongs to Lord Cawdor.

Like Manobier, it is encircled by a moat, and a river passes on the east side. It has two gateways, one the grand gateway opening on to the site of a barbican on the south, and a smaller one on the north. There is also a quadrangle, with four curtained walls and four round towers; but one of the towers has fallen. The great hall and chapel are still fairly complete, and present interesting features, and the ruin as a whole is in a tolerably good state of preservation. These four castles are perhaps the chief and most interesting ones. There are others, such as Narberth, Roach, Tenby, and a few minor ones of less importance. The number and importance of these Welsh castles far exceeds that of the ancient fortresses on the Scotch border, taking distance for distance along the frontier. The policy



KIDWELLY CASTLE.

of the early Norman kings allowed any Norman knight to build a castle, to take as much land—from the Welsh—as he could manage to hold. This gave a volunteer frontier guard, and secured the building of castles without expense to the king. Later, when Edward I. conquered North Wales, Royal castles were also built, of which Caernarvon is the most splendid. Readers of Scott's "Betrothed" will look with interest on our illustrations of such fortresses as that which was maintained at the Garde Douloureuse.

G. E. MORRIS.



OSIER-BEDS, the shoots of which are cut yearly for making baskets, hoops, lobster-pots, and eel-traps, are a form of crop of which not nearly as much is made in this country as their profitable return warrants. Properly managed, they nearly always pay well; and, in addition, they are very ornamental, and for the whole of the summer, autumn, and winter are one of the very best forms of covert for game. They are commonly seen near rivers, especially in parts where the ground is flooded in winter. But osiers may be grown anywhere on good ground, and are a rapid and paying crop, giving very little trouble, though they need some attention even on the banks of tidal rivers. It is estimated that in the whole of Great Britain there are only between 7,000 and 8,000 acres of osier-beds; but these average three tons of rods per acre, and the value of the crop when harvested is often at least £15 per acre gross return. As fruit cultivation is immensely increasing in England, there is a corresponding increase in the demand for baskets to put the fruit in. This is the main reason why osiers, unlike most farm crops, keep up their price. Immense quantities are now imported from Belgium, France, and Germany, because our own crop is not nearly sufficient. They do not need a wet soil or to be near water. All that the willow roots need is that the land shall be good, and not too dry or sandy. Stagnant, boggy ground does not suit them at all, though they will grow well in light loam. Many species of osier are of most brilliant colouring in winter and early spring. In some the rods are golden yellow, in others the bark is almost scarlet, with a bright polish, and the osier-bed forms a brilliant object from December to February, just before the rods are cut. The kind of willow grown varies from the slender tough withes used in making

small baskets and eel-traps to the large fast-growing rods suited for making into crates for heavy goods. The planter must find out for which kind there is the readiest market in the neighbourhood, and then get his land ready. It needs thorough clearing, and trenching to the depth of from 20in. to 30in. The young osiers should then be put in. These should be taken from a nursery in which they have been "schooled" for one year, as in that case they will produce a crop fit to cut one year earlier than if the cuttings were planted at once in the new osier-bed. The cuttings when transferred to the osier-bed should be put in 12in. apart in the rows, and these rows made at 2ft. distance from each other. They will need hoeing to keep the ground open, which will cost from £1 to £2 per acre for the first two years, and this should be done before the middle of June. When the osiers are well started they grow so densely that they kill out the weeds themselves. The rate of growth even on ordinary field-land is astonishing. They will add 18in. in a week! February and March are the months for planting, and March also sees the osier harvest, when the time comes to cut them.

In the Fens the harvesting of the rods begins earlier. But this depends usually on the season, the object being to cut them before the sap begins to rise. We would particularly invite the attention of those of our readers who are desirous of planting coverts for game to the use of osier holts. They are a paying crop, and a quick crop, giving cover sooner and of better quality than almost any other form of underwood, and are also very ornamental. It is true that they are cut yearly, but this is not till the shooting season is over. Meantime there is no covert which pheasants like so much as osier-beds, especially if they are near water. In the Fen country, and by the sides of rivers

which flood in winter, the crop is cut and begins to pay well in three years after planting. Elsewhere from four to five years must elapse; but then, instead of being cut once every seven years, like ordinary underwood, they are cut every year, and yet every year they sprout up to a height of from 5ft. to 9ft. or 10ft., according to the kind planted. According to a pamphlet issued by the Board of Agriculture drawing attention to this excellent crop, the cost of preparing and planting varies from £14 to £23 per acre.

The difference is largely due to the cost of manure. But where floods overflow the land in winter no manure is needed.

Our illustrations show the preparation of the rods for the basket-maker's and crate-maker's business. It is among the pleasanter and more picturesque forms of "natural workmanship," in which the craftsman deals with something made *nearly* as we require it, and gives the necessary finish to enable it to be put directly to human uses. Our osiers take the place of the bamboo of the East for this kind of work, though it must be owned that the osiers fall far short of the bamboo in universal usefulness.

The yard of the rod-maker nearly always stands near a pool, in which he can stand his bunches of withes to

soak and suck up moisture. Preferably it is by the river, for then the osiers can be brought straight down from the osier-bed, whether on the Thames or Fen rivers, or Ouse or Trent or any navigable stream, and delivered from the barges on to his wharf. There was a very large osier wharf until late years on the Hammersmith shore of the Thames, close to Craven Cottage, whither hundreds of tons of the willows cut on the Thames eyots were brought. One night it caught fire, and burnt with a mighty flare all the rods, both stacked and piled in barges, and even those standing in old useless barges used as soaking-pools being burnt in one huge bonfire.

The first scene of *ROD-MAKING FOR BASKETS* shows the men and women at work stripping rods early in the spring, when the bark is loose. The willow is drawn through a pair of iron springs, and the bark comes off easily. The tall elderly man with the stick on the side, with his hand on a trammel-net, is one of the family of Beasley, so well known on the Isis. Of the wicker contrivances standing by the trammel-net, the larger is an eel-pot and the smaller a trap for taking crayfish in. The latter is made of the most delicate little osiers, hardly larger than rushes. The old waterman whom the Royal Humane Society always kept on duty in Christchurch Meadows at Oxford, used to employ his abundant leisure, between the rare occasions on which he had to fish someone out of the river, in making these crayfish pots, which were quite works of art. In these, and in the eel-pots, the bark is left on the rods.

The second illustration shows the freshly-cut tops of willows, not specially-grown osiers, but of the willow bushes, which are commonly called "palms," being bound up into bundles. This scene of *BINDING WILLOWS*

is taken in March. The buds and flowers are bursting out on these branches, and the whole business of their use is less economical and more roughly worked than that of osier cutting and peeling. There is a fortune waiting for someone who will first establish osier growing and osier peeling on a large scale, and then find a proper market for the bark. It contains from 8 per cent. to 10 per cent. of tannin, and the quantity is constant. Oak bark varies so much that it ranges from 6 per cent. to 20 per cent. To get this you must cut down an oak tree, instead of a year-old willow stem, and, *per acre*, the amount produced by osiers in a given number of years is very much greater than in an oak wood. It is osier bark that is used to tan Russian leather, though it is a decoction of the bark of the birch which gives it its agreeable aroma. But



H. W. Taunt.

ROD-MAKING FOR BASKETS.

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H. W. Taunt.

BINDING WILLOWS.

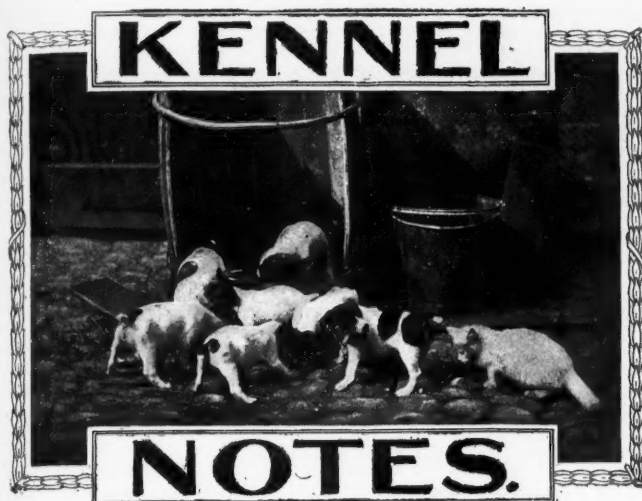
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An average crop gives 150 bunches of rods to the acre, and a heavy crop 250 bunches. Harvesting costs about 1½d. per bunch, and the selling price is at present about 2s. per bunch. One of the willow growers in the Fens states "that an osier holt in a suitable site, well planted, cleaned, and cared for, and filled up and replanted when necessary, has always paid its way, and sometimes gives very good results indeed." This is high praise from a farmer.

When the rods are cut, which should be done as close to the stumps as possible, they are tied into bunches according to size. The lower ends, after purchase by the merchant, are set in water. After the rods have stood thus for some time the bark can be peeled off easily, and the withes are called "white rods."

osier bark also tans the Danish kid, which makes some of the best men's gloves in the world. Here this excellent and valuable material is wasted. It is a clear case of loss of a natural product.

We hope that those of our readers who feel inclined to make an investment in some side industry of the country may take up osier growing, after making proper enquiries, and let us know the result of their experiments.



THE extraordinary differences that exist in the structural development of the various breeds of dogs are well illustrated by the representations of the types referred to in this article, though, in the opinion of many persons well qualified to judge, the poodle and the curly retriever are related by ties of blood. The former breed, which is here represented by Mr. Edgar Bruce's HOODLES, the first prize winner at the recent Bournemouth Dog Show, is no doubt a very ancient continental variety, and according to a writer in the old "Naturalists' Library," "first rose into favour in Germany, and during the revolutionary wars was carried by the troops into France, and only in the latter campaigns became familiar to the British in Spain and the Netherlands." This may be accepted as unimpeachable evidence regarding the approximate date of the introduction of the poodle into this country, for the "Naturalists' Library" is a very reliable work to follow; but be the above statements correct or not, there can be no doubt at all that for generations past the poodle has been regarded on the Continent as a most useful dog for sporting purposes. In this country, there do not appear to have been many very serious attempts made to utilise him for field work, and possibly this circumstance, combined with the fact that it is the custom both here and abroad to clip his coat in a more or less fantastic



W. Hazel.

HOODLES.

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manner, has caused the public to imagine that the poodle is a species of canine clown and unfitted for any serious work. This, however, is by no means the case, for he is one of the most intelligent of dogs, faithful to his master, a prince amongst companions, hardy, good tempered, and in fact one of the most valuable breeds. HOODLES, the subject of the accompanying illustration, is curly in coat, but corded specimens, possessed of long rope-like jackets which trail upon the ground, are the most valuable, though, in the opinion of many breeders, the curly and



W. Hazel.

TIVERTON BEAUTY II.

Copyright

the corded animals are of one and the same breed, only that the coats of the latter are in a more developed state.

The curly-coated retriever, represented in our illustration by Mr. S. Darbey's Champion TIVERTON BEAUTY II., the winner of over fifty first prizes and specials, is a variety that, during the past twenty or thirty years, has been losing ground steadily in the estimation of sportsmen, who, for their purposes, prefer the flat or wavy-coated variety, one of their chief reasons for this being that these are more tender in the mouth than the curls, and so do not maul their game about so much. Much conflict of opinion exists regarding the origin of the curly-coated retriever, some authorities contending that he is a descendant of the Irish water spaniel and Newfoundland, whilst others affirm that he is largely made up of poodle blood; which seems extremely probable, as the workman-like qualities of the poodle were surely utilised by retriever breeders at one time or other. The absence of patronage for the curls is no doubt a subject of much regret to sportsmen of the old school, whilst to the public, who always admire a handsome dog, be his merits what they may, his extinction would be a blow, for the bright, glossy jacket, with its series of crisp, tight curls, which in a good specimen cover him all over, body, ears, legs, and tail, excepting only the face, is a never-failing source of admiration. There are few more intelligent dogs, moreover, than a well-bred curly retriever, which may be either black or liver in colour, though the former preponderate, and for the purpose of guarding dwellings there are no better dogs. It is to be hoped, therefore, that some new supporters of this attractive, useful, and intelligent breed will come forward, and that by their assistance the complete resuscitation of the curly-coated retriever will become an accomplished fact.

The Skye terrier which forms the subject of the accompanying illustration is Miss E. Badely's ACRYSE MOSES, and he may be accepted as a very good representation of a Scottish breed of terrier which, if called upon to do so, can perform a great deal of useful work in the pursuit of vermin. Of late, however, the Skye terrier has rather given way to the hard-haired Scottish and Dandie Dinmont terriers in the estimation of sportsmen, but this is more on account of the first-named variety having, for some unexplained reason, fallen into the hands of ladies, than from any deficiency of pluck on the part of the dog.



W. Hazel.

ACRYSE MOSES.

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Like the Dandie Dinmont, the Skye is a long-bodied breed, his coat being luxuriant, harsh to the touch and very weather-resisting, and not soft or silky like that of the Paisley terrier, a variety that closely resembles him in shape and size. Skyes may be either drop or prick eared, the subject of our illustration belonging to the latter variety; but they are a difficult kind to judge, as the luxuriance of their coats conceals many defects; so much so, in fact, that it used to be a by no means uncommon practice in the North to plunge a Skye terrier in water before expressing an opinion upon his merits, as the immersion had the effect of making his coat cling to his body, and thus the outline could be



W. Hazel.

CHELSEA PREMIER.

Copyright

discerned. The Skye possesses one great peculiarity, namely, that his skull is wider at the forehead than it is at the back between the ears, and this circumstance should be noted carefully by those in want of a good specimen of the breed.

The Yorkshire terrier is generally connected with the toy varieties of dogs, and so, of course, the smaller specimens most undoubtedly should be, but there exists a larger variety which is capable of better things than leading the life of a pampered pet. On the other hand, the silken-coated little Yorkshires, with their beautiful silvery bodies and golden-coloured heads, may claim, when in full coat, to be most lovely dogs, and few better specimens exist than CHELSEA PREMIER, the subject of our illustration, which is owned by Mesdames Walton and Beard, who have exhibited him most successfully at many important shows. A peculiarity of the Yorkshire terrier is that the puppies are always born black and tan in colour, and change their jackets to the gold and silver shades which are so much admired after they are a few months old. As so much care and attention have to be devoted to the coats of these dogs, they, beautiful as they are, can scarcely be recommended to the amateur as pets, for the least inattention to the necessary details will quickly transform the lovely little arrangement in gold and silver silken hair to a ragged mass of tangled, unkempt tresses.



THE RHODODENDRON.

THIS is queen of flowering shrubs, and, in its more common forms, one of the most familiar. Unfortunately the Rhododendron is too often seen in many English gardens; it is allowed to overwhelm everything else, and once the shrub enjoys the climate and soil it seeds about everywhere, forming a dense undergrowth, which is undesirable in the landscape, and hurtful to the other tree and shrub life that one wishes to encourage. Never use the Rhododendron without reason. When bold groups of sumptuous colouring are desired, or one wishes to clothe the woodland with colour, then use the finer varieties of Rhododendron, especially if the garden is upon a hillside, and a rich and varied colour effect is gained in the late spring or early summer. The writer once visited what may be truthfully called a Rhododendron garden in North Wales—Tan-y-bwlch, in the Festiniog Valley. In the first June days the hillsides were aglow with colour. Looking across the beautiful vale, with a famous trout stream wandering down to the sea in the bottom, the piles of flower-colouring made a striking and memorable picture. Mr. Oakeley had planted some of the finer hybrids, not merely the voracious purple *R. ponticum*, which we prize more for covert than for the garden. In this Welsh garden a Rhododendron that had monopolised valuable ground was removed. It was a huge example of its race, and when rooted up a natural rockwork was disclosed, a feature that many who love their gardens would give much to possess. This

natural rockwork was developed, and is now the abode of beautiful alpine flowers. Although departing from the subject of Rhododendrons, one may say that all natural rock of this description should be turned to the best possible account in making a rock garden. The commonest Rhododendron of all is *R. ponticum*, which was introduced from Asia Minor, and is at once known by its purplish flowers. This is the kind familiar in woodlands, and is planted for covert. The present glorious race owes its origin partly to this species, for *R. ponticum* has been crossed and recrossed with *R. arboreum*, the noble tree-Rhododendron of India, *R. catawbiense*, and *R. caucasicum*, which have all laid the foundation of the present splendid series.

SOIL AND PROPAGATION.

The shrub loves peat, like the hardy Azalea, which is even more brilliant in colour. Though peat is advisable, it is by no means essential, as heavy loam will suffice, with some well-decayed leaf-mould added. One important point must not be overlooked—the need of moisture. Hence in dry, thirsty gardens, upon chalk or limestone, where there is a shallow soil only, Rhododendrons fail utterly. If this fact were more often considered, failures would be fewer with the American or peat-loving shrubs, such as these, *Kalmias*, *Azaleas*, *Andromedas*, and others. They may be planted now with success, and where danger from drought is apprehended, it is wise to form a saucer, so to say, round the shrub, so that the water will thoroughly moisten the whole ball. As regards ways of increase, these are by seeds, layers, and grafting. In the case of procuring large stocks of *R. ponticum* for covert or other purposes, seed is sown in a sheltered spot out of doors, and to give shade the bed is covered with spruce branches until the seedlings appear. Sowing in this way in the open is advisable where very large quantities are desired, but generally it is best to sow the seed in pans or boxes, which should be placed in a frame. As the seed is very small, great care must be taken in sowing. Drain the pans thoroughly with broken crocks, placing over these some of the rougher part of the compost, and then fill up to within half an inch of the rim with sandy peat. Make the whole quite level. Sprinkle the seed thinly, and just cover with a little sharp silver sand. Moisten the soil by placing the pan in a pail of water, which will percolate through the hole in the bottom and thus obviate any risks of the seed being washed out. Sow the seed as soon as possible after ripening, and when the young plants are of sufficient size, dibble them into other pans, transferring them from these to the open garden.

PROPAGATION BY LAYERING AND GRAFTING.

We always advise layering where this can be accomplished, as in the case of plants with branches sweeping the ground. In this way one obtains own root plants, and all risk of collapse from the use of grafted shrubs is obviated. The best time to layer is the autumn, when the portion of the branch that is to be buried must be tongued, that is, treated as one would the Carnation. Cut the shoot halfway through, and split it up for 3 in. or 4 in., inserting in between a small stone, to prevent the wound closing up. Then peg down securely, and cover with about half a foot of soil. The most usual way of raising Rhododendrons is by grafting, a pernicious system, because so often the host is too vigorous for the scion. The writer has seen scores of instances in which Rhododendrons have failed either through improper grafting or a too vigorous stock, with consequent disappointment and vexation at unnecessary labour and needless expense. When grafting is performed, the stock should be seedlings of *R. ponticum*. These when about the thickness of a cedar pencil should be lifted from the open ground and potted. Grafting is performed in July and August, and the plants must be kept in a close propagating case for about six weeks afterwards. We never advise grafting to be performed at home. This work is best left to the expert propagator, but grafted plants we should never purchase if seedlings or layered roots were obtainable.

THE FINEST HYBRID RHODODENDRONS.

As nurserymen's lists are usually of considerable length, intending purchasers are frequently perplexed as to the kinds to select. The following are of great beauty, the flowers decided in colour and produced in bold clusters: *Altaclarensis*, scarlet; *Atrosanguinea*, blood-red; *Baron Osy*, cream with maroon blotches; *Blandyanum*, crimson-red; *Brilliant*, scarlet; *Broughtonianum*, rosy red; *Caractacus*, purple-crimson; *Dhuleep Sing*, blackish-crimson; *Duchess of Cornwall*, white, marked with yellow; *Everestianum*, rose-lilac; *Frederick Waterer*, brilliant crimson; *Helene Waterer*, white, edged with red; *Helene Schiffner*, pure white; *James Marshall Brooks*, scarlet; *John Waterer*, glowing crimson; *Joseph Whitworth*, purple-lake; *Kate Waterer*, deep rose; *Lady Eleanor Cathcart*, rose spotted with a chocolate colour; *Lord Eversley*, crimson-scarlet; *Michael Waterer*, scarlet rose; *Minnie*, blush white; *Mrs. John Clutton*, white; *Nobleanum*, scarlet, very early flowering; *Rosalie Siedel*, white, spotted with pink; *Sir Humphrey de Trafford*, rose, yellow in the centre; and *W. E. Gladstone*, crimson-rose.

DWARF RHODODENDRONS IN FLOWER EARLY.

The writer has often felt surprised that the very early-flowering Rhododendrons are not more often planted in gardens. *R. praecox*, for example, is a delightful kind, the bush smothered with rosy lilac bloom before March is out, and it creates a pleasing feature in some sheltered quiet corner where peat-loving shrubs, the Heaths, *Andromedas*, and the like, are happy. When planted out in a cool conservatory it flowers still earlier. Another kind that braves the winds of March is *R. davuricum atrovirens*, which grows between 4 ft. and 5 ft. high, and bears a wealth of purple flowers, each about 1½ in. across. The two charming little Swiss species, the Alpine Roses of high alpine pastures, *R. ferrugineum* and *R. hirsutum*, which form charming little bushes, not more than 2 ft. high, with bright red flowers in midsummer, are useful for the rock garden.

CLIMBERS FOR THE GREENHOUSE.

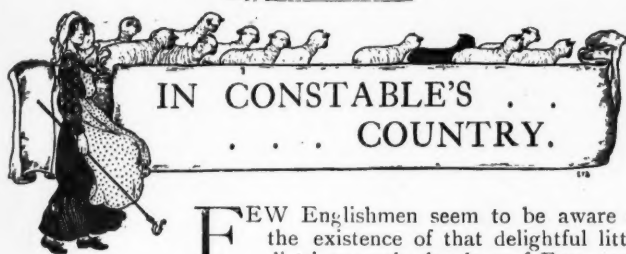
Of late years, climbing plants have been little used in the greenhouse, and much of the charm of this structure has therefore departed. But by draping the rafters and pillars the harsh lines of the structure are softened, and the plants are seen to advantage hanging in festoons from the roof. We think one of the most charming features of the plant houses at Kew consists of the *Fuchsias* in the greenhouse, the trails of flowers hanging in profusion from the rafters; and yet climbing *Fuchsias* are almost rare! The climbers must be carefully trained in position until the allotted space is covered, and when cutting back is necessary, it should be done immediately after flowering. Keep the growth overhead well thinned out, to give as much light and air as possible to the occupants beneath. *Asparagus plumosus*, *Bignonia*, *Bomarea*, *Brachynema*, the beautiful *Clematis indivisa* and its variety *lobata*, *Cobaea scandens*, *Ecceomocarpus scaber*, the little *Ficus repens* and *minima*, which cling like Ivy to the walls, *Hibbertia dentata*, yellow, *Ipomoea*, *Jasmine*, *Kennedya*, *Lapagerias*, *Mandevilla*

maevoleus, Manettia bicolor, the popular climber, Smilax, or more correctly Myrsiphyllum asparagoides, Passion-flowers, Tacsonia, Fuchsia, and Tropaeolums or climbing Nasturtiums, are all available, and repeat flowers of varied colouring.

THE JAPANESE QUINCE AND ITS VARIETIES.

The writer was driving through a country lane in Hampshire lately, and passed a cottage almost covered with the Japanese Quince (*Cydonia japonica*), which the warm sun and sheltered position had tempted to flower profusely. The Japanese Quince is a thoroughly artistic shrub, with its strong spreading shoots and clusters of showy crimson flowers. There are several varieties, but the brilliant colour of the old kind is more enjoyable than the tender shades, which are far less effective. We advise, however, that the variety *cardinalis* should be obtained, as this is very deep crimson, almost blood-red, so rich is the hue, whilst one must not forget the white *nivalis*, and *princeps*, a pronounced scarlet. This shrub may be planted in the open, where it forms a spreading bush, but unless the soil and position are very favourable, the best results are obtained upon a sunny wall. It is interesting to know that the Japanese Quince may be used also as a hedge plant. The writer has not planted it for this purpose, but intends to try it. Perhaps someone who has a Quince hedge would give him some advice. Another beautiful shrub is *C. Maulei*, which resembles *japonica*, but is of slenderer growth, and the flowers are orange-scarlet. This sometimes bears highly fragrant yellow fruits. Sprigs of Japanese Quince are useful to cut for the house and to arrange Japanese fashion.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.—We are always pleased to assist our readers in matters concerning the garden, and to receive notes and photographs of interest for our "Correspondence" columns.



FEW Englishmen seem to be aware of the existence of that delightful little district on the borders of Essex and Suffolk which has been christened "Constable's Country." Here at East Bergholt, a straggling old-world village on the Stour, the great landscape painter first saw day; and from the wealth of beauty around him—the sparkling mill-stream, the rich pastures dotted with cattle, the sloping uplands crowned with wood and cornfield, among which here and there appeared an ivy-covered farmhouse dating from Tudor times—he drew the inspiration of his finest pictures.

"My boyhood," said Constable, "made me a painter." His father was a miller, and his early days were spent around the mill-dam and tow-path, or in haymaking or harvesting in the rich cultivated country around. So deep an impression did these scenes make on him, that his cows are always of the Suffolk breed—hornless.

It is an easy day's journey by cycle from London, only about sixty miles, in fact, or it may be reached by taking train from Liverpool Street to Ardleigh. At Dedham, with its stately church and long, wide village street, we enter enchanted ground. We have only to walk a few steps by the river-side, and to look back across the meadows at the cluster of red-tiled houses nestling round the lofty steeple, to realise what a truly delightful spot is this Vale of Dedham.

Constable was once travelling by coach through this district, when he chanced to remark to his neighbour how beautiful the



R. A. Hamblin.

DEDHAM POOL.

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country was. "Yes, sir," replied the other, "this is Constable's Country." "I then," said Constable, "told him who I was, lest he should spoil it."

From a hill near Stoke-by-Nayland, some three miles higher up the river, can be obtained a clear, uninterrupted view of the Stour Valley right away to Harwich at its mouth, fifteen miles away.

From Dedham we turn to East Bergholt, with its large church and ruined steeple, of which the neighbouring rustics with bated breath relate a curious legend. They say that His Satanic Majesty objected to the tower being completed. Three times, so the tale runs, did the masons build up the tower, and three times at midnight the Devil and his imps pulled it down. Although sober-minded tourists receive this narrative with a grain of salt, the fact remains that the tower is not carried beyond the first storey, and the bells are hung in a wooden cage in the churchyard.

A narrow lane, in summer almost a tunnel of leaves, so thickly do the branches interlace overhead, leads from the church down to the river-side. All labour expended in reaching this out-of-the-way spot is amply recompensed by the view from the bridge on a bright sunny day. The river flows clear and tranquil at our feet, in front is the old mill and the weather-beaten lock, on our right stands an old thatched cottage half hidden in the trees, while to the left stretches a wide expanse of rich pastures dotted with weeping willows bending to the water's edge, among which the river winds its sinuous course.

Mention might also be made of Stratford, a little village opposite Dedham, and its wooden fen bridge over the river. At Stoke-by-Nayland the altar-piece was painted by Constable, and a room is shown to visitors at the old house by Flatford Bridge, the walls of which are covered by sketches executed by Constable and his brother artists who stayed with him. East Bergholt church contains a memorial window to the great artist.

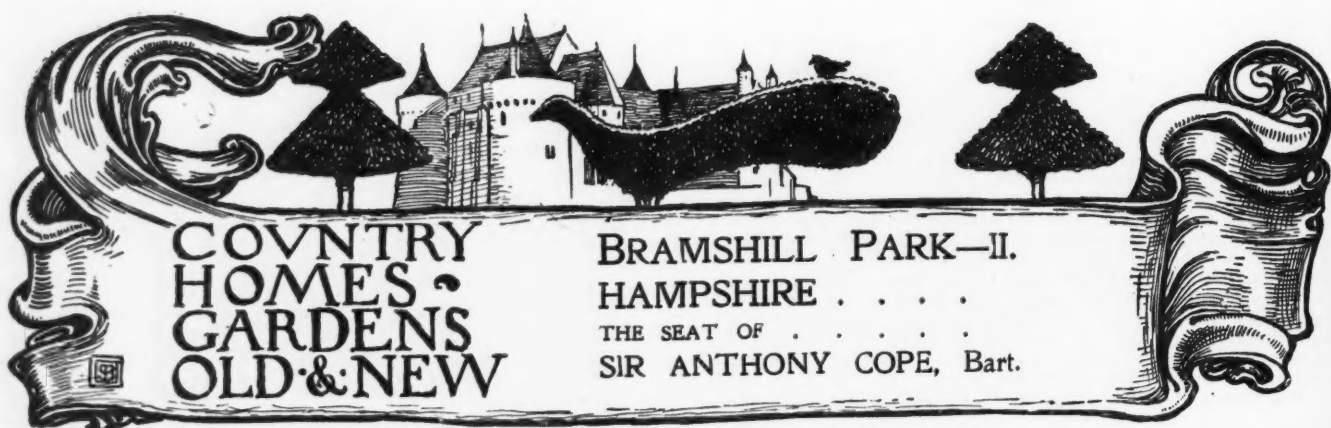
Altogether no visitor will regret his journey to the home and "happy hunting ground" of him who has been called England's greatest landscape painter, and who certainly was the founder of the English school of landscape painting.



R. A. Hamblin.

FLATFORD BRIDGE.

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IN the article published last week this beautiful Hampshire mansion was treated from the point of view of its history and architecture. But Bramshill belongs to its surroundings. Such places have their due relation to the hills and dales, to the soil and site, to the woods and meadows of the places in which they stand. Their individuality is that of a locality, and they rise just where we should expect them to be. It is not so in the case of all modern houses. The writer has in view the edge of a particular purple moor, where the heather creeps to the verge, and huge cliffs drop thence to the bank of a rapid river, which rushes past freighted with yellow foam, born of its fierce embrace with environing rocks, through whose beetling chasm it has descended with sounding leap; by the margin is a wood of alder, and dark firs stand a little way from the edge; and above, on the very crest, four-square to all the winds that blow, defying alike the fury of the elements and the sacred proprieties of that magnificent scene, stands the huge, bare house of a certain Member of Parliament, looking like an institution for the destitute or an asylum for the insane—a place that might have been dropped by some unfriendly giant seeking to blast the beauties of the region through which he strode.

But older houses like Bramshill give no such jarring note. Their builders, we think, knew the appropriateness of place and scene; and, then, Time has dealt with them gently, and Nature has kissed them with her tender green, and spread about them her waving woods, and her rooks are cawing in their elms, until they are as pictures set in her frame.

There is something very beautiful in those sombre firs, with their subtle colouring, which strike a dominant note in the landscape at Bramshill—that “eyry of Scotch firs” from which the house looks out far and wide over the vast prospect around, a prospect embracing the Nettlebed Hills in Oxfordshire, the heights of Buckingham, Farley Hill and the Finchampstead ridges of Berkshire, the Surrey Hills, Cæsar’s Camp and Aldershot, Odiham, the North Downs and Siden Hill in Highclere Park. It is supposed that Lord Zouche, the builder of Bramshill, may have been an arboriculturist, and have procured his seeds from Lombardy or Corsica, or from some of the Highland Lords during his embassy to the King of Scots. However this may have been, these firs have prospered exceedingly, and Charles Kingsley speaks truly of “James the First’s gnarled oaks up in Bramshill Park, the only place in England where a





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A CORNER OF THE BOWLING GREEN TERRACE.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

painter can see what Scotch firs are." The late Sir William Cope maintained, in fact, basing his contention upon the "Transactions of the Highland Society," January, 1865, that he had Scotch firs finer than Scotland could boast. One giant in the fir avenue was 15ft. in girth at 4ft. from the ground, and 18ft. 11in. at the root, with a spread of branches of 72ft., and another was even larger at the root, while one tree had a bough exceeding 8ft. in girth. The Scotch firs are the great glory of Bramshill, and



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THE HOUSE FROM THE PARK

"COUNTRY LIFE."

the eastward march, up hill and down dale, is sure and steady. As you stand upon some eminence, you see, stretching to the eastward of each tract of older trees, a long cloud of younger

Kingsley wrote with true knowledge and love of them: "In countless thousands the winged seeds float down the south-west gales from the older trees, and every seed which falls takes root in ground, which, however unable to bear broad-leaved trees, is ready, by long rest, for the seeds of the needle-leaved ones. Thousands perish yearly, but sure and steady.



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THE EAST FRONT.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

Kingsley loved their dark plummy branches and straight stems, their fragrance, and the delight of walking upon the soft bed formed by their fallen needles. Once, on a Sunday morning, when he was preaching in Eversley church, the news came that the firs were threatened by fire. Without a moment's hesitation he gave the service up to a curate, and, still in surplice, collected a party of men, leapt the churchyard wall, and with billhook in hand led his force to their successful fight with the flames.

The Bramshill firs reproduce themselves by seed, and thus

ones, like a great comet's tail. Truly beautiful—grand, indeed, to me it is—to see young live Nature thus carrying on a great savage process in the heart of this old and seemingly all-artificial English land; and reproducing here, as surely as in the Australian bush, a native forest, careless of mankind."

There are three principal avenues at Bramshill. The fir avenue, mostly lined with Scotch and silver firs, leads from the north-eastern front of the house towards Eversley, and is both beautiful and grand, and a drive branching



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THE HOUSE FROM THE WOODS

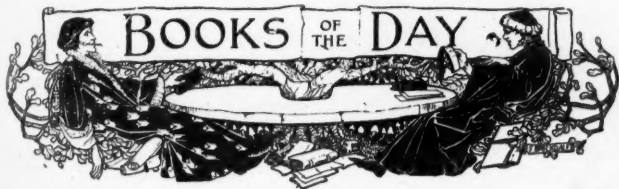
"COUNTRY LIFE."

from it to the hamlet of Hartfordbridge, and known as Lady Eversley's ride, passes through scenery of great beauty, in a narrow valley. The Reading avenue leads out to the little hamlet of Bramshill. It is the approach to the house from the direction of Reading, and is remarkably attractive, with its fringe of wild heather and velvet turf. One observer has remarked that "nothing can be more striking than the effect produced by the fine old pile suddenly breaking on the view, in the midst of country so primeval in character, and so finely harmonising with its peculiar style of architecture." The third avenue leads from the principal front rather steeply, between a double row of elms, down to an ornamental bridge over a tributary of the Blackwater, thence rising between lines of oaks gradually to Haseley Heath, where it ends at the distance of about a mile from the house.

From this account of fir woods and avenues, it will be surmised that the park is very attractive. Such is, indeed, the case, for the ground, upon the lower Bagshot sands, is very much diversified, greatly clothed with fern and heaths, the former in some seasons growing to a height of 6ft. or more, and there are grand oaks, chestnuts, and other trees.

These surroundings, as we have said, are very appropriate to the old mansion, and the pleasure grounds are not less in consonance with its character. The balustraded terraces, the mossy walls and piers, the flower-beds and the well-kept lawns are all very charming, and the bowling-green is most interesting. Fortunately, once again the good old English game of bowls is beginning to be played. The writer, in his prattling youth, grasped with little hands the heavy "biased" bowls with which his father used to play, and those who cherish such memories, or think of the famous bowling on Plymouth Hoe, rejoice at the revival of the game. Mr. Blomfield, in his "Formal Garden in England," says that bowling-greens existed in almost every old English garden, and he has collected many particulars of such as still remain. Always a pleasant spot was chosen for them, overlooked by a terrace, as at Bramshill, or a raised walk. Old Markham distinguishes between three sorts of bowling-greens: The "bowling-alley," the "open grounds of advantage"—that is, bowling-greens with a fall one way—and level bowling-greens. In "Country Contentments" he says, "Your flat bowles, being the best for close allies, your round byazed bowles for open grounds of advantage, and your round bowles like a ball for greene swathes that are plaine and levell."

We have devoted some space to the description and illustration of Bramshill, because of its many interests and singular beauties. It is one of those places that appeal powerfully to the imagination, and whose character and beauty will not easily pass from the memory.



A CURIOUS development of contemporary publishing is illustrated in Mr. Theodore Cook's "Story of Rouen" (Dent), in the "Medieval Towns" series. At any time previous to the present year or so, a work based upon so much careful research, and embodying so much well-ordered and minute information, would have appeared in library form with the solidity and spaciousness which we have been accustomed to associate with histories, especially when enriched with plans and pictures. But the position has changed, and to-day we like books to be little and dainty. Hence, Mr. Cook's history of Rouen is put forth in limp pocketable covers, with everything pretty about it. It must not be concluded, therefore, that it is a mere piece of pretty writing which he who runs may read. On the contrary, it is erudite and exhaustive. To a large extent, the history of Rouen is the history of England, for Rouen's duke, William the Bastard, had he not ruled that city to good purpose, would never have contrived to defeat Harold at Senlac, and thus achieve the conquest of England, and become our William I. Mr. Cook's account of William the Conqueror is one of the most interesting portions of his book. The compliment paid us by William was returned to some degree many years after, when Henry V. laid siege to Rouen. Mr. Cook gives the correspondence that passed between the monarch and the City of London on that occasion. "And pray you effectually," wrote the King, "that in al the haste that ye may, ye wille do arme as manie smale vessels as ye may goodly with vitaille and namly with drinke for to comme Harfleu and fro thence, as far as they may, up ye river of Seyne to Roan ward, with the said vitaille for the refresching of us and our said hoost." The City replied worthily with "Tritty botes of swete wyne, ten of Tyre, ten of Romeney, ten of Malvesey, and a thousand pipes of ale and here, with three thousand and five coppes for your hoost to drinke." Thus fortified, the hoost, as everyone knows, at last won the day, and Henry V. received the keys of the city. The next great incident in Rouen's history was the imprisonment of Joan of Arc, of whom Mr. Cook writes as all gentlemen must. And so the book goes on, now concerned with bloody deeds, now with the glories of architecture, now with social life, now with pageantry, and now with music, in which section Mr. Cook prints an ancient madrigal, which he has discovered, and which Mr. Fuller Maitland has arranged for modern instruments. Not the least interesting portion of a fascinating volume is the account of the remarkable carvings in the Mison Bourgheroulde, which commemorate the Field of the Cloth of Gold and certain pastoral scenes. At Hampton Court there are pictures of the famous



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THE HALL.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

but futile *rapprochement* of Henry and François, but the Rouen bas-reliefs are the best pictorial rendering of the pageant that exists, and Mr. Cook's appeal to the authorities to protect them in some effectual manner, for the stone is rapidly crumbling, is one that should be echoed by all persons interested both in art and in historical records. They are unique and priceless. Here we must leave a work of continuous interest to the general reader, and of real value both to the student and the intelligent visitor to Rouen.

Sir Mountstuart Elphinstone Grant-Duff is a distinguished man of affairs, a botanist of high attainment, and one of the best connoisseurs in good stories now living. He has, during his long public career, met everyone worth meeting, and gathered a story from each; and he is now, in the evening of life, giving other people the privilege of reading extracts from the diary in which some of these anecdotes are recorded. Already four volumes of these "Notes from a Diary" have appeared, and two more, covering the period of Sir M. E. Grant-Duff's official residence in India as Governor of Bombay—1881-86—have just been published by Mr. Murray, under the same title. Naturally, they are concerned to a considerable extent with Indian affairs, but the author has cut out whatever seemed to him too official. And if what is left is interesting rather to Anglo-Indians than to readers who have never travelled east of Suez, there is still a large residuum of entertaining matter collected from letters from home. The sentence, "European mail arrives," which constantly recurs, is a certain indication of amusement, for the Governor's correspondents were careful to keep him supplied with the kind of news he liked best. Thus: "Mrs. Sydney Buxton sends me the following: Two Americans dined at an hotel, and when the bill was brought they thought it was exorbitant. One swore very much on the occasion. His friend reprimanded him. He swore again, and said he could not express himself too strongly against such rascality. 'If he has done wrong,' his friend said, 'God Almighty will punish him.' 'Oh! that He's done already,' replied the other, 'for I have his silver spoons in my pocket.'" Again, someone attended a spiritualistic séance, and asked to speak with the soul of Lindley Murray. She was told, after a while, that the soul was in attendance. "Are you the soul of Lindley Murray?" she asked, tremblingly. "Yes, I am," was the reply. Another communicant, a widow, interviewed her deceased husband. "Are you happy?" she asked. "Happier than I was on earth," he answered. "Ah! then you are in heaven?" "No," he said, "quite the contrary." In connection with this we might mention an epitaph on a firework-maker quoted by the diarist: "He has gone to the only place where his fireworks could be excelled." Finally, here is a story of rustic England: After an election, a newly-enfranchised Devonshire voter was asked whom he had supported. "I voted for the lady," he said. "But there isn't one standing." "Well, Poll Early's name came on my ballot paper, before the names of the two men, so I thought I'd vote for her." We have extracted at random. Careful selection would have revealed a higher form of wit, but the reader who reads the book at our recommendation will have no cause to grumble.

The sea is just now "up," as the saying is. We have had Mr. Kipling's "Seven Seas" and "The Fleet in Being," Mr. Jacobs's short stories, Mr. Conrad's "Nigger of the Narcissus," Mr. Bullen's "Cruise of the Cachalot"—all treating of the sea with a realism to which the regular maritime novelist is a stranger. And now come "Idylls of the Sea" (Grant Richards), also by Mr. Bullen. Mr. Bullen has been a practical sailor. He began as anything, became an able-bodied seaman, went whaling for years, became an officer, and is now settled in London in a berth in the Meteorological Office, and, remembering in tranquillity his old emotions, has been reproducing them in a series of articles. A number of the best of these are printed in the volume before us, which bears upon its cover a glimpse of a blue ocean, a labouring vessel, and a blood-red sky. Strange things happen at sea, says the old adage, and, indeed, Mr. Bullen has witnessed many. He tells of whales and sharks, wrecks and derelicts, submarine earthquakes and oceanic birds, flying fish and turtle. He tells of a modern Jonah who was swallowed by a whale and returned almost immediately at the instigation of an explosive bullet fired into the leviathan's bulk. A man who would miss a whale must be a very poor marksman. He tells of another man who went up in a waterspout; but this story he permits the reader to disbelieve—the others are all vouched for. It is truly a remarkable

book, written always well, and sometimes with very considerable power. The best paper seems to us that on "hovelling"—the name given to the occupation of hardy and intrepid seafarers who hang about the channel with sailing boats, seeking any job that may come their way. Sometimes they act as pilots, sometimes they take a man ashore, sometimes they fetch a tug, and when there is disaster they always find it out. We like this paper best because we have seen "hovellers" at work, both from the land and from shipboard, whereas Mr. Bullen's other experiences are mostly tropical and remote. But it is a fascinating book.

The taste for short stories is not popular, in spite of the success of M. Kipling's "Day's Work," whose recurring editions would seem to give the statement a denial. Where an author chooses, as Mr. Kipling now does, and as Mr. Bret Harte once did, to infuse into the short story the intensity and interest that is usually expected only in a novel, the case is different. But, as a general rule, an author who after making a name as a novelist offers a volume of brief tales, finds himself neglected. Yet the public is often wrong. Mr. Eden Phillpotts' public, for example, will be wrong if, on the grounds that his "Loup Garou" (Sands and Co.) is not a long narrative, like "The Children of the Mist," they spurn it with disdain. They will be wrong, because they will then miss several excellent and very engrossing experiments in grimness, and also one of the very best humorous yarns we have ever read. For the most part, the book deals with West Indian life, which Mr. Phillpotts knows well, but in the story to which we refer—"The Skipper's Bible"—we are at sea, and the only connection that it has with the West Indies is the circumstance that an important figure in the comedy is a nigger condemned to be hanged at Kingston, Jamaica, for murder. The ship is Yankee, and to a man immoral and profligate. But the mate, who is English, has his doubts, which, brought to action by the appeals of the condemned man, in whose wickedness he refuses to believe, prompt him to take a definite, and, on that vessel, quite unprecedented line. The nigger is distressed for want of "sky piloting"; with a Bible, he says, he could die

happy. There is only one Bible on board, and that belongs to the captain, who defends it with a revolver. The mate and he have a terrific fight, and the mate, with a bullet in his shoulder, wins. The story is a little masterpiece of humour and pathos, and is quite the most notable thing in the book. The other tales are good in their gruesome way, but "The Skipper's Bible" is the real thing.

To novel readers who can find excitement, or at least beguilement, even in stories in which they cannot believe, we can recommend Mr. Tom Gallon's new book, "The Kingdom of Hate" (Hutchinson). Mr. Tom Gallon, it may be remembered, made his first appearance as a novelist with the somewhat Dickensian tale called "Tatterley," which showed the transformation, on lines made familiar by "The Christmas Carol," of a curmudgeon into a good fairy godfather. It was a nice piece of work, if somewhat derivative, and we hoped the author would go ahead. But he is derivative still, although the novel before us is his third; and the fact rather lessens confidence in his powers. The influence of Stevenson is too apparent—Stevenson combined, perhaps, with Anthony Hope. This, however, is of consequence only to the critic; to the reader it matters nothing, because the influence of Stevenson and Anthony Hope makes for interesting reading. Mr. Gallon begins by showing us a party of young men at supper in a London restaurant. They part in the small hours, and one of them dares another to enter the first house in a certain adjacent street in which there is a light. The challenge is accepted, and the young man, an artist named Bernard Aubanel, is no sooner inside the door than he is bound and gagged, and perforce married by a Roman Catholic priest to a beautiful damsel. He is then bound again, and borne away in a carriage. And all this in 189-! Of course he has then to find out who the lady is, and when we say that she is the real Princess of a little European realm, and that before all can end happily conspiracy has its fling, enough will have been indicated. The book is machine-made—of that there can be no question; but it is really a clever and very readable romance.

A DAY'S STALKING ON ANTIMILO.

"AFTER all, there's nothing like it." These were the words with which my companion, V—, had closed the discussion, which had ended in our deciding that we would go absolutely alone, and stalk alone, at Antimilo. And here it was, not half a week later, and yet I was prepared to set out in the company of Star, the eldest son of the tenant of the island.

Well, if the flesh was weak, there was some excuse for the weakness. In the first place, had I not on the first day of all brought off a successful stalk lasting no less than four mortal hours, and had not my victim tumbled off the cliff where I shot him right down to the sea, where, after an ineffectual attempt the next morning to find him with the boat, I recovered him, or rather only the head, on the third day, by a five hours' climb to the place I had fired from, and two hours' sitting in cold rain whilst the lad descended the precipices. Moreover, I take it there is no place more calculated than the islet of Antimilo to break through a resolution of this kind. As a rule you are either laboriously climbing up, or cautiously climbing down, and when the ground is level you still have to pick your way among big loose stones and thorny bushes. After a day or two of this one gets very tired of carrying a rifle and rucksack. Moreover, I was giving V— something like a decade, which was perhaps the reason he good-naturedly said nothing when, after dinner, I announced my intention of taking Star with me the next day.

Accordingly, with the lad carrying rifle and rucksack with lunch and other necessities, and myself carrying only my telescope and alpenstock, we left camp about eight, the rain of the early morning having ceased. An hour's sharp climb brought us to the spot where I had killed my very first Antimilo ibex, and thence we proceeded to spy the moraines extending southwards and below us. The shepherd's quick eye was the first to pick up the game.

"Αγρια!" he ejaculated; and I soon had the glass on them. One look showed they were but small stuff, and not worth considering, so we moved on northwards. Not many hundred yards on there is another prominent ridge of rocks, and here the boy made a still better spy; so good indeed that it was some time before I managed to get the glass on two or three does in the middle distance. The boy, however, eagerly combated my suggestion that this again was a lot not worth considering.

"Το μεγαλον! Τα κερατα!" he kept on repeating, making

a sign that the horns were a yard long at least. Seeing nothing else to be done, I decided on a direct approach, and we made our way down the cliff. Just as Star was about across the moraine at the bottom, and I in full view on it, I became aware of part at least of the herd not 500yds. away, and looking hard at us. For a while I lay still, then crawled back to the rocks I had just left, and got out my telescope. Under the ridge of rock which now formed my sky-line were a fairish buck and three does feeding. Close beside, and in a line with them, lay the skeleton of AN IBEX. The herd did not seem alarmed, so as Star



THE HEAD OF AN IBEX.

was out of sight I crawled down the moraine in full view, on my back. Just as I had finished the descent and got out of sight down came the rain. I sheltered as best I could under a rock, not daring to call to Star, who was somewhere above, and who, of course, had not the sense to bring me the mackintosh cape out of my rucksack. After the shower was over he turned up, and we went on without much difficulty to a ridge of rocks some 200yds. from the ibex, who had taken shelter in a series of caves. The buck was actually lying on the skeleton. Then came another storm, but this time I had my cape. The wind being perfectly steady, I smoked a pipe and watched the beasts. After an hour of this, not seeing any chance of the ibex moving, and still less of my getting any nearer, I decided to avail myself of a fine interval and take the shot. Everything was against me—the distance, the fact that the buck being under an overhanging rock was quite in shadow, and lastly the fact that he was lying down. As subsequent investigation proved, the

nature of the ground was very deceptive, and the ibex were a great deal more below me than I realised. I rolled up my cape, put it on the edge of the rock, rested my left hand on it, and fired. The bullet, I think (for I failed to find the mark afterwards), went over the buck's back, and sent him bolting out of his hole like a rabbit. Up jumped a lot more out of various caves, including a much better and whiter buck, but he was out of sight before I could reload. I went down and examined the ground, but, as I expected, found no blood-marks. The skeleton was that of a doe, which no doubt had been wounded by the shepherds and come here to die.

We followed the herd for some time, and then I called a halt for lunch. Afterwards we went on again, and came right on the herd on an open hillside which descends to a little peninsula on the west of the island. Perhaps I was a bit lazy, but anyhow I convinced myself that there was no cover nearer than the

ridge of rocks we were on, so I crept out to its furthest end and took the long shot, at the big buck this time.

Of course I missed, and again with two "shots of despair," as Mr. Buxton calls them, I sent after him. I found next day that the distances were much greater than I had thought, so the day must have been a bad one in every way for judging distance.

The herd went on with a vengeance this time, and I knocked off and went back to camp. The end of the matter was curious. When I fired these last three shots V— was actually stalking another lot, whom my firing disturbed. But my herd came to him and gave him an easy chance. He knocked the second-best buck into the sea, and the shot disturbing his original lot again, they galloped close past him and he killed another. Finally, the very next day I found the herd again, and shot the master buck; and here is his head. SNAFFLE.

DERELICT RACE-COURSES

STUDENTS of Turf history will not need to be reminded of the fact that in 1879 Mr. Anderson succeeded in passing the Metropolitan Race-course Bill, the object of which was to prohibit racing within a radius of fifteen miles from London. A writer in the *Badminton* volume on racing states that the disorderly gatherings held at Kingsbury, Bromley, and West Drayton were the chief culprits at whom this bolt was hurled. Nevertheless, the Bill can only be regarded as a more or less posthumous Act; for, as he adds, "The Jockey Club had already, with a view to the abolition of these very meetings, passed certain laws, fixing the minimum of added money to be given to a day's racing, so that before Mr. Anderson's Bill came into operation, the above-mentioned meetings, with many others of like character all over the country, had actually been smothered out of existence." Harry Custance, in his "Riding Recollections," tells a delightful anecdote of the West Drayton course, which was run by a certain witty, impudent adventurer, styling himself "Count Bolo." The "Count" had somehow contrived to insure his Grand Stand for £600—it was not worth a quarter of that amount—and when Mr. Anderson's Bill was about to be presented, by some unfortunate accident the ramshackle building was burnt to the ground. Bolo promptly visited the insurance officials, who were inclined to settle the matter at once for £400, which offer was refused. Soon afterwards the insurance company got to know there was something rather shaky, so they refused to offer any money at all, but claimed to exercise their right of rebuilding the stand at a cost of £600. While this was being done, the Bill was passed, and the meeting done away with; consequently the new stand was a white elephant to the over-sharp "Count."

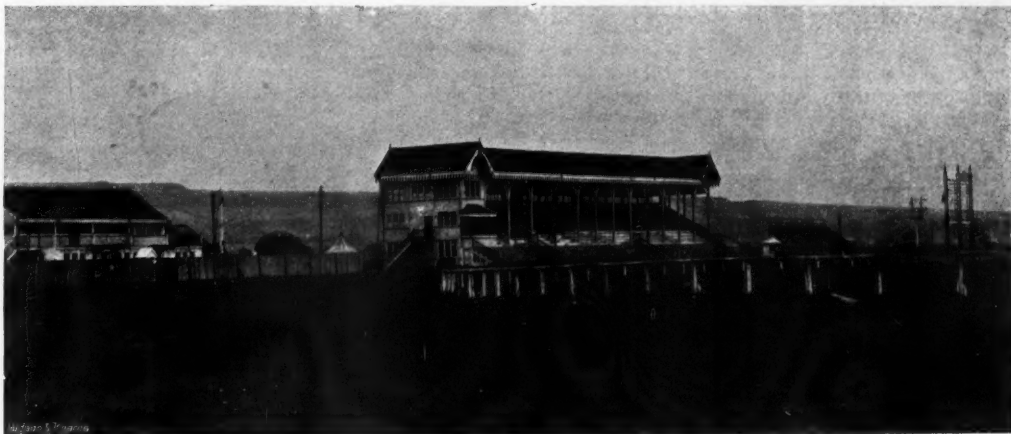
There can be little doubt, however, that these small metropolitan meetings were veritable "carnivals of rascality," and their disappearance from the fixture list cannot be mourned by any honest individual. Yet there is something interesting in tracing the history of once popular racing resorts, it being a subject rather neglected by Turf historians. Of course, were we to go back to very remote times, an indefinitely long list might be compiled. However, some particulars of the most prominent among those abandoned within the last 100 years should suffice.

At the period when the "First Gentlemen of Europe" regulated the fashions, Tothill Fields' Races were quite a Society function, though the horse-racing heats appear to have been varied by other contests. For instance, the *Morning Chronicle* of August 2nd, 1791, informs us that during one such

interval, "Six jackasses then started for a gold-laced hat, which was won by half a neck; and afterwards, three young ladies ran for a holland smock, in their shifts and under-petticoats; and the whole concluded with a pitched battle between a brickmaker and a bricklayer, which was decided in favour of the former." All this being witnessed by about 2,000 persons of the *first fashion*.

In 1817 a scheme was concocted by the parishioners of Fulham and Hammersmith for forming a race-course on Wormwood Scrubs. The races were to be held annually, and the preparations were all perfected, when, within a few days of the anticipated opening, the whole concern was suddenly and imperiously put a stop to by the authorities.

The year 1837 was one memorable in the annals of horse-racing, inasmuch as the pastime was introduced almost into the very heart of the metropolis. We allude to the notorious, if short-lived, Hippodrome at Bayswater, the site of which is now occupied by a part of Kensington Gardens and St. John's Church, Notting Hill. Despite opposition of all sorts, and in spite of claimants of right of way, and every other obstruction, the Hippodrome was opened in the month of June, its huge circumference being duly encircled by high wooden palings, and guarded internally by iron hoopings. The site was admirably chosen. The grounds contained a steeplechase course and a flat-race course, each two miles in length; and a large hill in the centre enabled the spectators to see the horses from start to finish. The place, too, was highly patronised; for the stewards included the Earl of Chesterfield and Count D'Orsay, the company, the Dukes of Brunswick, Grafton, and Beaufort; while 3,000 horsemen and about 20,000 ordinary folk paid their shillings at the gate. The sport, however, was wretched, owing to the scanty prize-money offered; while the strong and persevering spirit of opposition displayed against the venture was the cause of premeditated disturbances marring the day's pleasure. Nothing daunted, the proprietor had his grounds remodelled on a plan which left out the portion of the land in dispute; and when the course was reopened in May, 1841, a liberal programme was provided. The card included the Hyde Park Derby Stakes of 25 sovs. each, with £200 added, and the Hyde Park Oak Stakes of 15 sovs. each, with £100 added. The fixture was spread over two days' racing, and was followed by another meeting in June, but we have not come across the returns of any sport there subsequent to this date, and are unable to say how long the races were continued until the place finally closed. According to Douglas Jerrold, the corrupting influence of this enclosure seriously affected a preparatory school for young gentlemen in the Bayswater Road, kept by a strict maiden lady. Before its establishment, the pupils were accustomed to take their whippings fairly quietly, "but now, since the introduction of vicious racers near the school,"



PORTSMOUTH PARK.

not one will receive even what she calls the most moderate physical remonstrance without considerable kicking."

To come to more modern times, the abandonment of some meetings is rather inexplicable. Not so many years ago excellent sport was to be witnessed at Shrewsbury, where the late autumn fixture occupied the place now represented by Derby in the eager competition for the hay and corn stakes. Enormous fields used to turn out at this once-popular resort for the back-end nurseries; certainly the programme was liberal enough as far as quantity was concerned, ten races figuring on the card being a common occurrence, and this, too, for a short November afternoon. We suppose that Windsor must be now taken as representing the position once held by Egham, which boasted the honour of being a Royal race-course. It was here that William IV. in 1836 presented a Royal

purse of 100 guineas, and in rep'y to the vote of thanks, prepared on the course itself, made his famous speech on the advantages of horse-racing as the Englishman's favourite sport. It was many years before the thickly-populated Birmingham district learnt to support a race-course of its own. True, it now has Birmingham and Dunstall Park to its credit, which makes the failure of Four Oaks Park all the more curious. Undoubtedly there have been, and are still, one or two minor meetings, which from the advantages of locality alone eke out a precarious existence as consolation scrambles for those who have not been fortunate at some famous fixture in the neighbourhood. Of such as these, the most notable to go under within recent years has been Scarborough, which always acted as a pale reflection to the August glories of the Knavesmere. Yet, despite the objectionable element mustering in strong



SHREWSBURY PARK.

force from the "Queen of Watering-places," Scarborough's breezy heights (when it did not rain) were vastly pleasant, and particularly so if one could view the sport from that delightful bow-window in Lord Londesborough's private box.

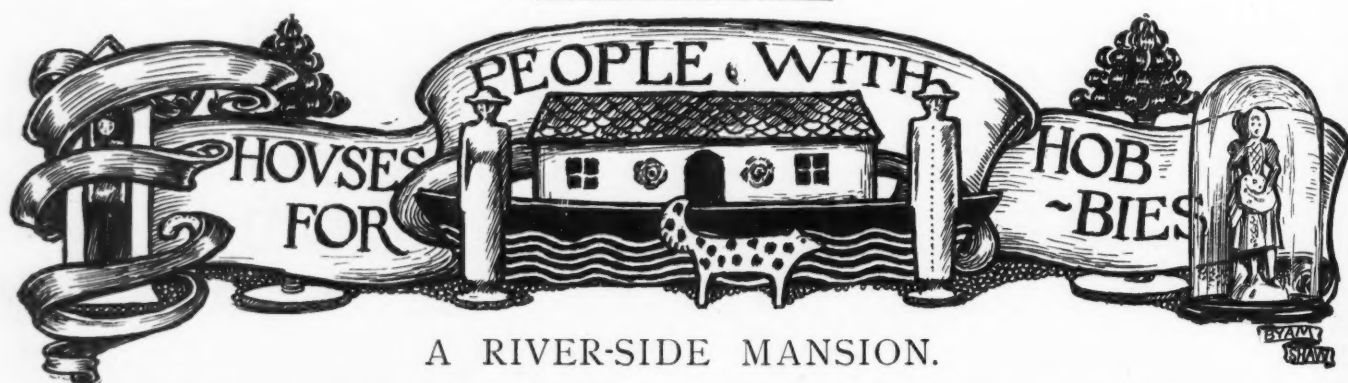
The last meeting held at Scarborough was the popular August one of 1893, and that would have fallen through had it not been for the patriotism displayed by the Malton trainers and licensed victuallers of the locality in guaranteeing the stakes. In the following year, however, the Jockey Club refused the licence, and perhaps it was as well. In places the course was full of rabbit-holes, and even the five furlong races had to be run on what was almost a circular track, and terribly narrow at that.

"Who killed Portsmouth Park?" Here is a subject for an epic poem on the lines of "Cock Robin." Some say the railway company, which generally managed to run its London specials half-an-hour behind time. Personally, we prefer not hazarding any opinion; but it does seem a pity that a well-laid-out course like this, possessing a magnificent straight mile, not to speak of stands, ring-, and stabling, on the most up-to-date principles, should have come to smash. Only the other day the property was sold by private treaty to a Portsmouth solicitor, and the buildings are to be demolished, in order to split up the land into building lots. The Farlington track, however, will probably live in

the memory of racing men for some years yet, for was it not due to the enterprise of the executive that the Portsmouth Park Cup was here offered to decide the relative merits of Buccaneer and Nunthorpe, when one of the grandest single-handed battles on record was anticipated. Unfortunately, this match, which took place on November 10th, 1892, was a bit of a fiasco, in that Nunthorpe was manifestly off colour, and suffered a hollow defeat. Three years ago, a second-rate meeting, though one of considerable antiquity, disappeared at Lichfield. The races were held on the land subsequently purchased by the military authorities, and the plea put forward for their extinction, despite a distinct guarantee in the original instance that no interference would ever be attempted, was that they contaminated the young soldier!

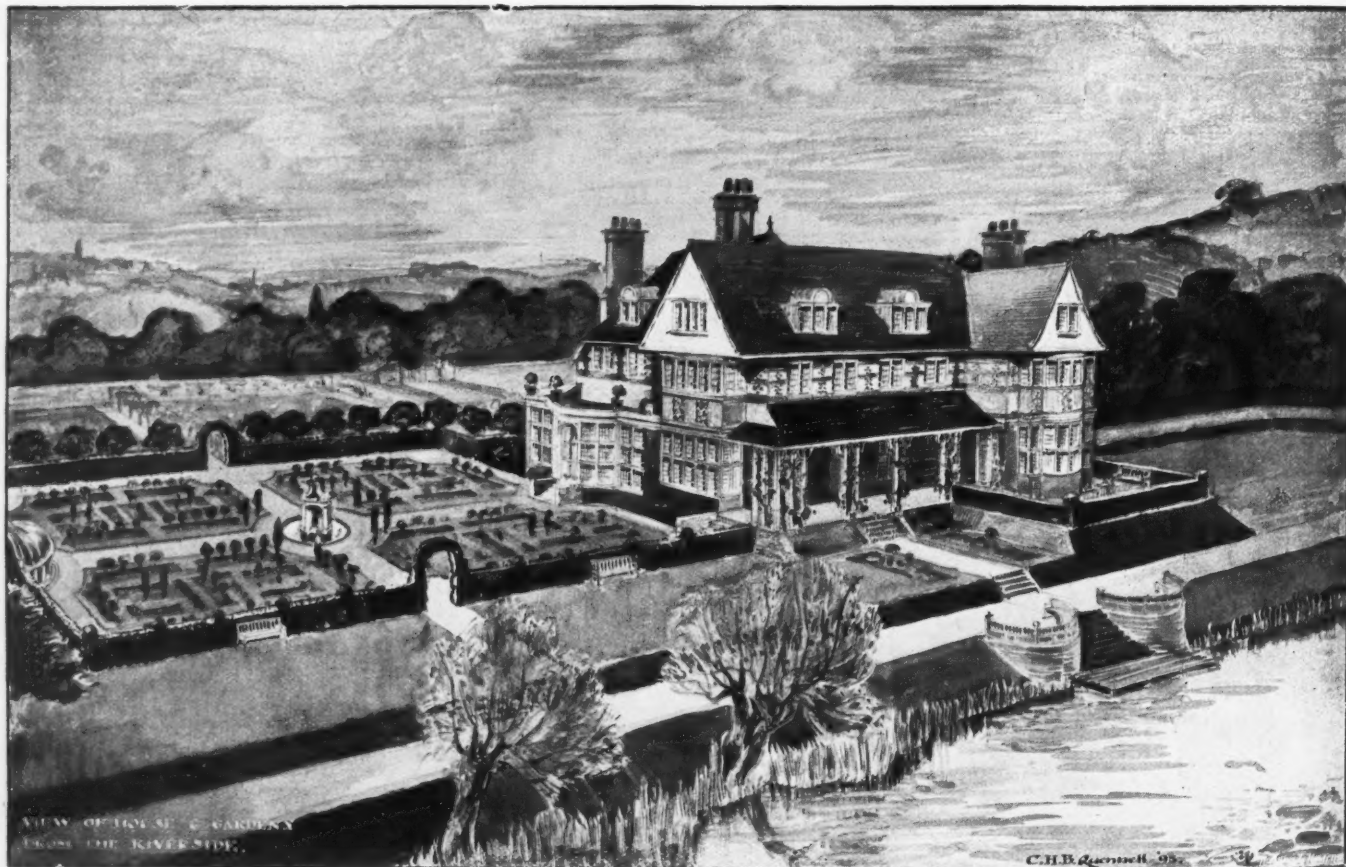
In conclusion, there are several race-meetings which can hardly be termed abandoned, though their original courses are now either derelict or the site of jerry-built villas. In a word, they have had to shift their quarters. For instance, Hampton Races have been transformed into Hurst Park; Croydon has moved down the line to Gatwick; Leicester—to the exceeding great joy of the extortionate Jehu—has quitted "the top of the town" for the Oadby track, three miles further on; while at Nottingham, the old in-and-out course in Sherwood Forest has been abandoned for the up-to-date conveniences of Colwick Park.

H. G. ARCHER.



BEFORE the Thames was appreciated as it is now, there were few good country houses on the upper parts of the river. The famous Grotto, near Goring, which has been the envy of generations of railway travellers on the Great Western, was almost the furthest up stream of large river-side houses fifty years ago. Even that is only a river-side house by the accident that its site was the one place on the good estate of which it was the demesne house which was obviously

years ago. Burcote, once the property of the notorious Jabez Balfour, was, however, on exactly the site which modern taste would choose for the enjoyment of the river. This has been almost rebuilt and metamorphosed by the Dowager-Countess of Crawford, until, with its terraced gardens, deep verandahs, and boat-houses, it is almost all that such a house should be. On another adjacent property the house has also been rebuilt, and fitted with every possible appliance, including river tea-house,



suited for such a purpose. Further up the river there were also few good houses built expressly to enjoy the immediate neighbourhood of the Thames. Newnham, for instance, cannot be called a river-side house. It is a large mansion set on the hills fringing the valley. At Little Wittenham, opposite Dorchester, there was once a splendid house with a garden of five terraces, belonging to the Dunch family, but that was pulled down many

electric-launch house, and covered boat-house, which taste and money could provide. It is worth noting, in contrast to modern ideas, that the beautiful ancient manor house of Sutton Courtney, though on flat ground close to the river, is built so that it turns its back on the Thames, and faces the road. It is, however, well worth looking at as a specimen of domestic architecture, very well suited for a moderate-sized

country mansion. For the benefit of those of our readers who intend to build for themselves, we give some designs and elevations for a good house suited for any flat site, but more particularly meant to stand on those level meads which border the Thames, the Avon, or the other "full-fed rivers" of the South. Light and space are the two main features of the interior. There are five bedrooms and two nurseries on the first floor, and five bedrooms on the second, besides servants' rooms. Outside, the gardens, terraces, and very large verandah are meant to make the outdoor life around the house especially enjoyable. Boat-houses have been omitted from the designs, because they can be fitted in according to taste, and must be constructed with reference to the amount of "shipping" the owner may wish to keep.

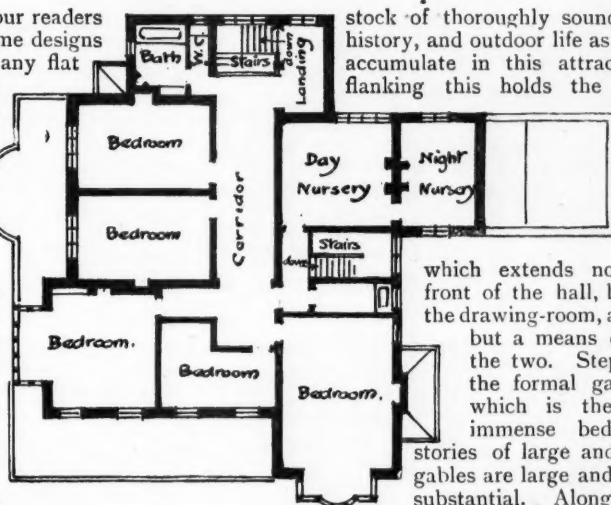
The designs and plans in great part explain themselves. The dwelling-rooms and reception-rooms, for instance, all look towards the river. The verandah, a feature most appreciated by the elder members of the family, is so spacious (18ft. by 34ft.) as to make a kind of winter garden if removable glass screens are fitted into it, as they might be. Both drawing-room and dining-room are directly connected with this verandah by doors, and a third door leads into it from the corridor between the two. But the feature of the interior is the billiard-hall and conservatory. The entrance is from a fore-court on the side furthest from the river. From this a lobby leads to a broad flight of steps, at the top of which is the billiard-hall, the largest and most attractive room in the house. It makes a kind of general room, in which all members of a large house-party can sit, chat, read, play billiards, or do nothing, as suits them. In the ingle-nook are two good oak settles on either side of the fire-place, while above, on the same front as the mantel, are shelves to hold such a

stock of thoroughly sound books on sport, natural history, and outdoor life as the proprietor may like to accumulate in this attractive room. The corridor flanking this holds the stair-foot at one end and leads to the dining and drawing rooms at the other.

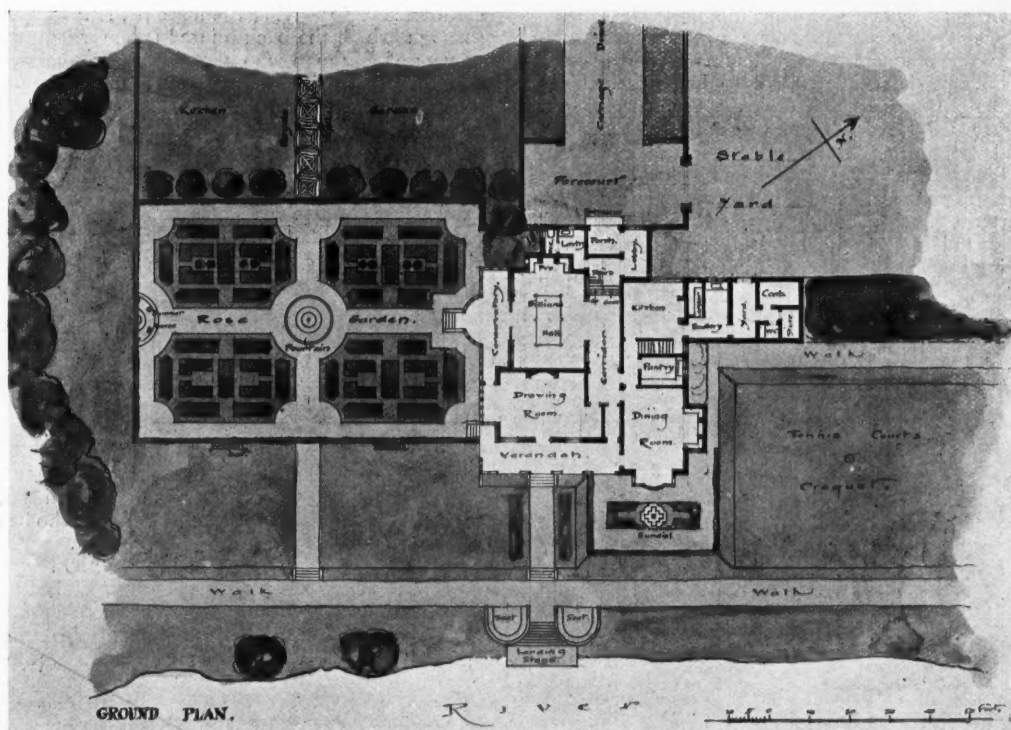
On the opposite side from the corridor the hall gives into a fine lofty bow-fronted conservatory, which extends not only along the whole front of the hall, but also across the end of the drawing-room, and makes not only a lounge, but a means of communication between the two. Steps lead down from this into the formal garden, beyond and behind which is the rose garden. There is immense bedroom space above, two stories of large and well-lighted rooms. The gables are large and white, the roofs deep and substantial. Along the whole river front run two very long terraced walks, the lower one gravelled, the upper of turf. It is on this that the

tennis-courts will be made, so as to run parallel with the river, and avoid the losing of balls, and of temper. The bay-window of the dining-room is carried up into the bedroom above, and rises from a small separate raised court, intended for outdoor breakfast in summer. The material of the house depends on local conditions, as it always should; but if in the Thames Valley, we may safely set it down as red brick and white plaster. The mouldings, window-frames, and mullions are all of solid and good design, without any "artists' fancies" or finicking ornament. The estimated cost of such a house is £3,000; and provision is made in the plan for extending it, if wanted, by building round the square at the back, and making a stable-yard and a curtilage.

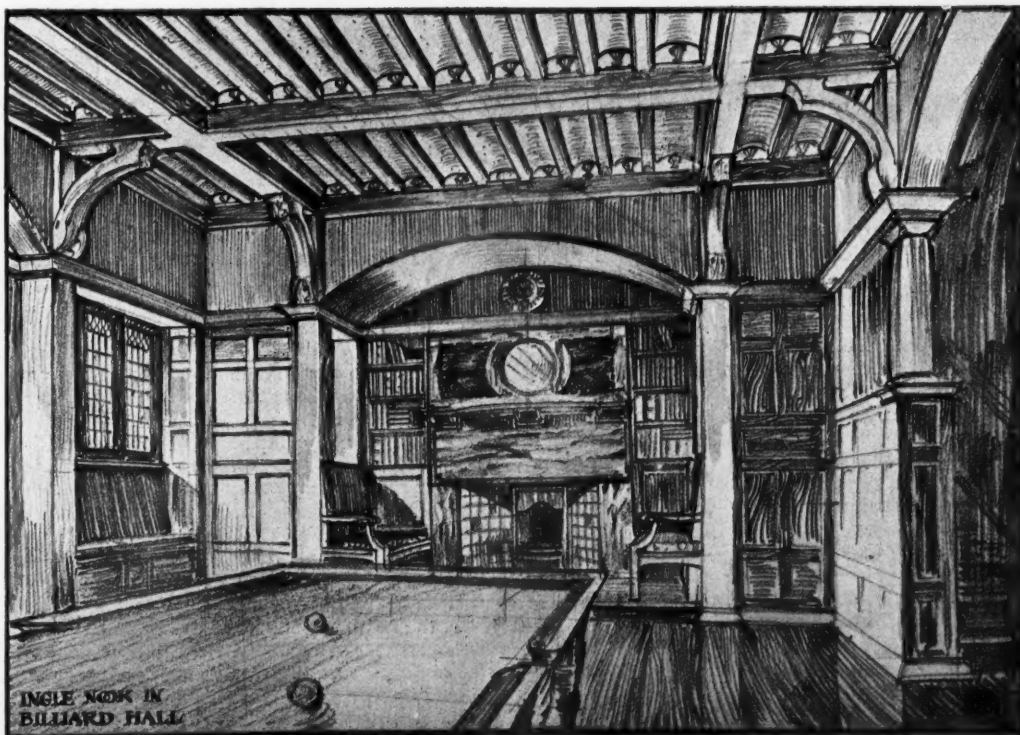
We do not know whether larger houses are about to



FIRST FLOOR PLAN.



GROUND PLAN.



INGLE NOOK IN BILLIARD HALL.

be in demand in England, or whether good small houses will, as some people believe, take their place. But as human nature is much the same at all ages, we judge the prospects of the future by the experience of the past, and conclude that those who have ample means will incline, generally speaking, to build large houses, while those who have less to spend will avail themselves of modern brains and intelligence and have a good house in moderate compass. The river-side house here given represents a compromise between the summer cottage and the large country

house. In interest on capital, allowing £1,200 for the cost of the site, it does not represent more than £170 per annum, at 4 per cent. This is not more than the rent of a moderate-sized London house, and if the owner's tastes lie in that direction, there is much to be said for making the country the headquarters, and keeping only a *pied à terre* in town, in place of making the town house the main object and the country cottage the playground. But as tastes vary, we have now furnished our readers with suggestions for both alternatives

C. J. CORNISH.

AN ARTISANS' PACK.

FOR nearly two centuries back the South Yorkshire artisans have among themselves kept up various packs of hounds, harriers principally, and followed the chase with an ardour and love not surpassed by the most devoted Melton man who ever donned scarlet. In the early days, though in more modern times matters have altered a little, the artisans were the sole Masters of the different packs, and none could say them nay in the management of them. Their *modus operandi* was as follows: The community clubbed together, throwing their subscriptions into one common fund, and took out a licence for the pack, which cost them £5. The huntsman was then chosen by vote, being possessed of course of the necessary qualifications, and was paid a small nominal sum for his duties, there being also some perquisites attached to his office, chief among which were the spoils of the chase, every hare killed becoming his property. For every hare he was allowed the sum of one shilling, and the committee drew lots for the chances, the winner taking first choice, or first "kail," as it is called, the others in succession, till the number of hares came to an end.

One can picture the group of rough, bronzed North Country workmen standing round a clean-scrubbed table in the village inn, a big fire blazing in the grate, and sending its rays over the rugged faces, whilst the huntsman, in velvet cap, green coat, and

Hallamshire, the work of the late Joseph Hunter, F.S.A., gives some notices, the only ones I think, of this artisan huntsman, from which, together with personal knowledge of the district and enquiries among the inhabitants of Ecclesfield, I have acquired the information given in this article. Thomas Ridge, who commenced hunting at sixteen years of age, was a true type of a hardy fair-dealing Yorkshireman, and hunted with the pack for sixty years, and made it his proud boast that during all that time, in the many long runs in all kinds of weather and over every sort of country, he had never met his match "for endurance or for saving the hare at the last." And the country through which the pack hunted is one which might well test the powers of any man who kept with his hounds—a country of hill and dale, rock-strewn moorlands and limestone crags, where often a clear head and cautious step were the only interventions between safety and a nasty fall.

A description I have been able to obtain of Thomas Ridge was given me by an old inhabitant of the village in the following words: "Why Tommy then wor a owdish man, rayther tall, a bit grey abawt his temples tha knoaws, and stooped a little, but ma word 'e wor a grand huntsman, and knowed what 'e wor doin'." Many are the tales told of this man of iron, and among them might be quoted one which I think before the rest shows

the power of his dogged spirit, kept up by the ardour of the chase, though labouring under difficulties beneath which many a strong man would not have felt it derogatory to succumb, or at all events to cry quarter for a period. I give it in the words of Mr. Gatty, who heard it from Ridge himself.

"On one occasion he started before daylight, and without breakfast, to hunt from Yorkshire Bridge beyond Moscar (the starting-point about twelve miles distant from Ecclesfield). There he got a little rum and milk at the inn, which he drank out of a white basin, but there was nothing for him to eat. On this refreshment he hunted all day, and left off at Beeton Rod, above Stannington, where at nightfall he came up to a man, going home from his work, who had two collops of bacon between thick slices of bread. He was so hungry

that he took a collop from the man and a piece of bread and gave him a shilling, saying, 'it was his first breakfast.'"

To hunt on foot from daybreak to nightfall, across hilly moorland country where the going is very heavy, covering some couple of score miles or so in the day, on a basin of rum and milk, speaks well for the constitution and sinews of a man, and one begins to understand how our soldiers have been able to undertake prolonged marches exposed to terrible weather and suffering awful privations, as in the days of the Peninsular War and other great campaigns. And again Ridge talked in cold blood of starting to walk to Huddersfield with his pack, a distance of some twenty-five miles, and, after reaching that place, joined a couple of other packs with which he was going to hunt in company, and travelled seventy miles in sixteen hours; at the end of it all they found a deep snow on the ground, on account of which they had to turn round and quietly retrace their steps without even the relaxation of an hour's sport.

Once again he started from Ecclesfield and gave up among the hills of Derbyshire, at Matlock, thirty miles away, and walked back home at night carrying three hares on his shoulder as trophies of the day's chase. There are few men nowadays who can boast of such a record of endurance in the pursuit of sport as this Yorkshire gimlet-maker, for the one or two instances here



A. and G. Taylor.

THE PRESENT ECCLESFIELD HUNT.

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splashed cords, stood whip in one hand and a pot of home-brewed in the other, watching the ceremony of drawing, and the three or four hares stretched on the table, and every now and again turning to some crony to give a detail of the day's sport. When the sport was over, and during the non-hunting season, the kennels of the pack extended over all the village and adjoining hamlets, for nearly every man who subscribed also kept a hound, fed it, and brought it up from a whelp, the selection of the pack, the weeding-out of the useless stock, and all the offices pertaining to kennel stud-master being left to the huntsman.

And here we are brought back to the chief subject of this article, viz., the history of a certain huntsman: Some five or six miles north from Sheffield lies the village of Ecclesfield, now, alas, showing too plainly the effects of a continued adjacency to collieries. This village has owned a pack of hounds for a century and a-half, and somewhere about the beginning of the second decade of this present one the post of huntsman was accepted by an artisan in the village, called Thomas Ridge.

The present vicar of Ecclesfield, the Rev. Alfred Gatty, D.D., a name well known in all circles, who has been incumbent for nearly sixty years—indeed, since September 23rd, 1839—and who has edited the standard history of the district,

recorded are only specimens of countless other similar feats, for a hunting period of sixty years allows margin for many incidents. Those must have been grand days for the sportsmen of this Yorkshire village when in the clear air of a fine morning, say in October, the echoes of the hills around gave back the cheery notes of Ridge's horn, as he summoned his pack from their widely-scattered kennels. The hounds were as eager as their huntsman, as many anecdotes prove, one case being related to me of a dog named Blueman who instinctively knew the hunting days, and who was always to be found in the early morning standing on a wall near his kennel listening for the horn, and at the first notes rushing madly to the spot where he knew the pack were assembling.

There, surrounded by a choice throng of hunting men, who no doubt to our modern eyes would have looked rather ridiculous, being in many cases without coats, in their shirt sleeves, and wearing the tall hat of the period, also carrying a stout cudgel to help them in awkward places, stood Ridge the huntsman, the description of whose dress is handed down to us. He wore a scarlet coat, the first one he possessed being given to him by one of the late Earls Fitzwilliam, who was a great admirer of Ridge's hunting qualities and endurance, and considered he ought to be in a more noticeable attire than his everyday working suit, his lower limbs graced by light-coloured cords ending in gaiters, his head crowned by a white hat with a gold band, a curved, silver-mounted horn and whip completing his rig-out, nearly everything having been presented to him by admirers.

When his "dappled darlings" were all moving restlessly round, their yelps vieing with the horn in finding the echoes, when Ridge had discussed a few preliminaries with some of the chief subscribers, when chunks of cold bacon, held tight in the embraces of thick slices of bread, had been stowed away on the persons of the followers, with a final look around the huntsman would place himself at the head of his pack, leaving one of his satellites to look after stragglers; another flourish of his horn, and away he would start on his tramp to one of the hunting grounds of the district, his step springy and his whole being thrilled with the ardour that only a true huntsman and lover of the chase does feel with a good pack in his rear and the prospect of a good day's sport showing ahead. Away they would trudge down between the hazel hedges just tipped with the warm blush of "brown October," a motley and slightly-disreputable throng, doubtless, when one contrasts them with the spick and span high-toned appearance of a meet of the Quorn or Belvoir, but with a firm determination to do their utmost to have a good day's sport, and to keep up with the hounds, though the lengthening shadows of evening should find them weary and footsore a long distance from home.

There is an old oil-painting still to be seen on the walls of the Sportsman Inn, Ecclesfield, bearing the date 1824, and the title of "The Ecclesfield Hunt," wherein the pack and the huntsman are portrayed, Ridge standing in his red coat urging on the hounds, whilst his followers, in high hats and white knee shorts, clamber over hedges and ditches in their excitement. The picture can scarcely claim the distinction of being a work of art, as the hounds are in most extraordinary positions and of abnormal size, to say nothing of the hare, which appears to be taking a few acres of country and a church in one mighty leap, and is proportionately about the size of a tiger; but it brings back to the more aged inhabitants of the village the good old days "when owd Tommy Ridge wor t' 'untsman, an' when there wor sum 'ares to 'unt, not loike now, when tha hes to walk a couple o' moile afore tha sees a rabbit."

There was no scarcity of game in the district in those days, especially in the shape of hares, as the accounts of various runs made by the Ecclesfield Harriers amply testify. As a typical instance, the account of one week's hunting is worth recording here.

Monday saw them begin, and every day, up to and including Friday, they killed four hares, and on the Saturday, after a hard day, managed to account for five, making the handsome total of twenty-five hares in one week, each day affording good sport and long runs, testing the powers of Ridge and his pack to the utmost.

In addition, we are told that every night of that week, after the day's sport, Ridge ended up with another favourite amusement of his, viz., dancing, at which he was a well-known performer, keeping it up until the small hours, with only a very short period of rest between that and the next day's tramp.

Among the other virtues possessed by this artisan huntsman it may be mentioned that he was a man who led a good life, very abstemious, and a regular and unfailing attendant at church and Sunday school; and, no matter how far the Saturday's run found him distant from home, the good church-goers of Ecclesfield would have thought something was radically wrong had they missed the spare figure of the huntsman when they

assembled within the walls of the grey old edifice for morning service on the Sunday.

His chief crony and hunting chum, a man who took the post of his first whip, was the parish clerk of Ecclesfield, Matthew Stringer by name, who, like Ridge, was also a stickler with regard to his religious duties, and of whom it is said that during the period in which he was clerk, from 1817 to 1865—forty-eight years—only two Sundays did he fail to attend to his duties. Truly, some of these Yorkshire workmen were made of reliable stuff.

Stringer was as keen in the pursuit of sport as his brother Nimrod, though perhaps not possessing all his qualities, and in Mr. Gatty's notes Ridge relates that on the last day of the week's sport just alluded to "the last hare we killed was at Silkstone town end, and Matthew Stringer said to me, 'Tom, if it hadn't been Sunday to-morrow we would have stayed at Silkstone all day.' But, however, we came back the same night, having some ten miles to walk, and were at our post of duty the next morning. And," he continues, "at that time I thought no more of walking to Manchester after dinner than some people would think of going to Sheffield."

Manchester, I may here inform the uninitiated, lies a little more than thirty miles from Ecclesfield, and the road leads through part of the wildest moorland in the famed Peak district, after which I think further comment is needless. Ridge was also accounted a very good workman at his trade, that of gimlet and centre-bit making, and could earn large wages, and, as I was told by a descendant of his in the village, "if t' Ridges hadn't been so fond o' huntin' they'd mebbe ha' been ridin' in their carriages by this; but there, *that* can't be helped."

The huntsman's characteristics seem to have been present in succeeding generations of Ridges, not, however, in every



H. W. Wild. BIRTHPLACE OF THOMAS RIDGE.

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member, for the renowned Tom was one of a family of twenty-one, and I am told that there were three other families bearing the name of Ridge, all connections, each of which reached the above total—quite sufficient, one would think, to populate a good-sized village and start a pack of harriers with a fair following on their own account. However, a son of Thomas Ridge was huntsman of a neighbouring pack, the Hallam and Eccles II, and at the present time a member of the third generation, a grandson, holds the post.

There is still an Ecclesfield Hunt, but the pack is now composed of beagles, which have lately afforded very fair sport, and there are still five or six packs of harriers kept up in the neighbourhood of Sheffield, mainly by subscription, and still the workmen of the various districts add a good share to their support, though they are greatly upheld and countenanced by the surrounding gentry.

The illustration on the opposite page is of THE PRESENT ECCLESFIELD HUNT, and is from a photograph taken of a meet at Whitley Hall, the residence of the Master, T. H. Bingley, Esq. The more conventional attire of the hon. huntsman, Mr. Stephen A. Smith, contrasts rather with the rougher, yet quite business-like, dress of the kennel huntsman, Tom Johnson, whose get-up is more after the style of his famous predecessor. The other illustration shows the birthplace and workshop of Thomas Ridge.

So the sport still lingers in the country-side, and the huntsmen, who still hunt on foot, have grand records to show when the season comes to an end, but I think that few of them can, even in the best of seasons, tell of anything that will approach the feats of days gone by; and old inhabitants of the villages, men who in their younger days followed the Ecclesfield Harriers in some of their glorious runs, lament January 13th, 1871, when, from the effects of serous apoplexy, poor old Tom Ridge left his pack for ever.

Beneath the shadow of the Norman church, with its quaint gargoyles and time-worn walls, the "artisan huntsman" sleeps,

a plain gravestone marking his resting-place, and bearing on it the following inscription :

" In Memory of the Ecclesfield Huntsman,
Thomas Ridge,
Who died the 13th of January, 1871."

" Though fond of sport, devoted to the chase,
And with his fellow-hunters first in place,
He always kept the Lord's appointed day,
Never from church or Sunday-school away ;
And now his body lies beneath the sod,
His soul relying on the love of God."

Surely few huntsmen have a better epitaph.

[The following note will be of interest in reference to this peculiar and most sporting hunt.—Ed.]

" *Re HALLAM AND ECCLESALL HUNT.*"

" DEAR SIR,—

" The above is a subscription pack ; the funds being mostly contributed to by our manufacturers and shop-keepers, it has a mixed following, consisting of professional gentlemen, tradesmen, and the working classes. A large number of the working classes who follow cannot afford to subscribe to the funds, but take their part by rearing our puppies, and in many cases also in keeping a hound. Our hunting days are Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. The Monday hunts are followed by the working classes and hound keepers. The Wednesday and Friday by the tradesmen and general body of subscribers. I may mention that our subscription list includes a number of the leading gentry of the city (Sheffield) and neighbourhood, amongst others being some of its M.P.'s. In fact, it is well supported and well represented by all classes. Sheffield is a sporting city. For the extensive country over which these hounds hunt, the best thanks of the committee are due to His Grace the Duke of Rutland, His Grace the Duke of Devonshire, His Grace the Duke of Norfolk, Earl Fitzwilliam, and a number of the leading local gentry.

" Yours truly,

" ARTHUR DIXON.

" *President, H. & E. H.*"



SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR A POCKET LUNCHEON.

PERHAPS it is unnecessary to apologise for the, at first sight, apparent incongruity of the subject of my article this week in relation to the general heading "Notes for the Table." The word "table" must not be interpreted too literally by those who read my column; my table may sometimes be bare turf, rock, or heather.

There is nothing like change, and the plain homely sandwich is apt to become monotonous, and can certainly be improved upon for the purpose of the simplest form of *al fresco* repast. I have in my mind at the moment the fisherman or the golfer, and for the benefit of him (or her) I offer the following suggestions for a pocket luncheon. Of course the "pocket" may be something more capacious than the regulation receptacle of a coat or jacket.

RISSOLETTES.

Pass some cooked chicken or beef through a mincing machine, with sufficient lean ham to flavour it, and mix the meat with a small quantity of finely-minced macaroni. Moisten the mixture with some thick white or brown sauce (according to the kind of meat used) which has been highly seasoned, and let it simmer for ten minutes, when the meat should be about the consistency of a thick paste. Let the mince cool a little, add some beaten egg to it, and spread it on a dish. As soon as it is quite cold take a small portion at a time and form it into balls; flour them lightly, and envelop each very neatly in pastry. Dip the balls into beaten egg and then into fine bread-crumbs which have been mixed with an equal quantity of broken vermicelli, and fry them in a bath of boiling fat.

LOBSTER CROQUETTES.

Cut up all the meat of a large lobster, pound it to a smooth paste with an ounce of butter, and pass it through a sieve. Then moisten it with a gill of thick white sauce, add a few drops of anchovy essence, a teaspoonful of sherry, and a small quantity of carmine, and season with celery salt and cayenne; heat the mixture gradually in a small saucepan, let it boil for two or three minutes, stirring it all the time, and turn it on to a dish to cool. Mould the lobster farce into little cone-shaped croquettes; dust them lightly with flour, pass them through beaten egg, and cover them thickly with dry bread-crumbs which have been coloured a clear red with carmine, and fry them in a wire basket.

COLD SAUSAGES.

Parboil some small home-made pork sausages, drain them on a cloth, let them get cold, then flour them and dip them into beaten egg, and roll them in fine dry bread-crumbs which have been well seasoned with salt and black pepper and mixed with some chopped parsley and a very little shallot. Put the sausages aside for a quarter of an hour, and then repeat the eggging and crumbing process, and after allowing another quarter of an hour for the crumbs to harden, fry the sausages in plenty of boiling fat and drain them thoroughly on blotting-paper before putting them aside to get cold.

SAVOURY ROLLS.

Make or procure from a baker who makes a speciality of fancy bread some little rolls of about the size and shape of a finger sponge cake. Split the rolls, open carefully, butter them, spread them with the following mixture, and then put the pieces together again. Pound the yolks of three hard-boiled eggs with an ounce of butter; add an equal quantity of tongue, or ham, which has been well pounded and passed through a sieve, and a large teaspoonful of *pâte de foie gras*; mix the paste thoroughly, season it with salt and pepper, and add six drops of tarragon vinegar.

EGGS A LA ST. PATRICK.

Hard boil as many eggs as are required, and when these are cold cut them through lengthways, and slice a little piece off the white so that the pieces will stand. Remove the yolks, and pound them with a liberal quantity of fresh butter, season them with celery salt, pepper, and a dust of curry powder, and add to the egg paste some chicken, tongue, and foie gras cut into small dice-shaped pieces. Fill the whites of the eggs with the mixture, and smooth the top into the form of a dome; dip them in beaten egg, then cover thickly with bread-crumbs, and after letting them stand for twenty minutes, fry the eggs, and drain thoroughly before the fire.

EGGS WITH CAVIARE.

Cut some hard-boiled eggs in halves, take out the yolks, pound them in a mortar with a small piece of butter, and mix them with sufficient delicately-flavoured white sauce (thick creamy *béchamel*) to form a smooth paste; add a few drops of tarragon, or cucumber, vinegar and a little finely-chopped tarragon and chervil. Refill the whites of the eggs with the paste, make a little hollow in the middle of each, and fill the space with caviare. Smooth the yolk over the top with a wet knife, and place the halves of the eggs in small fluted paper cases before wrapping them in grease-proof paper.

SALMON SANDWICHES.

Cut some thin slices of Hovis bread and butter, and stamp it into rounds with a medium-sized cutter. Place small flakes of cold boiled salmon on some of the pieces of bread and butter, then mix the fish lightly with a little stiff tartare sauce, and cover with another round of the bread and butter. Press the sandwiches with a knife, and, if practicable, wrap them in lettuce leaves before tying them up in paper.

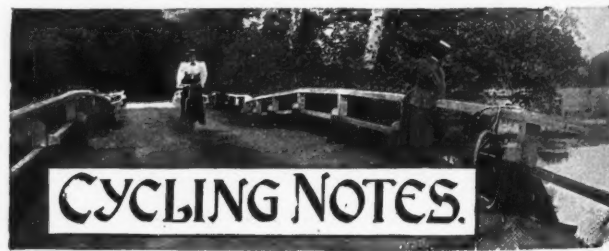
PASTRY SANDWICHES.

Roll out some good medium paste to about three-quarters of an inch in thickness, and cut it into squares or finger-shaped pieces. Brush over the top with egg, and bake in a quick oven until the pastry is a pale golden colour. On taking it from the oven, split each piece carefully with a knife, remove a little of the soft paste from the inside, and spread with a layer of chicken prepared according to the directions given below. Then close the sandwiches, and put them into the oven again for two or three minutes; let them cool on a sieve before being put away. Pass some cooked chicken, or veal, and tongue through a mincing machine (if chicken is used the liver of the bird should be minced with the other ingredients), and pound with a little butter, then add a small quantity of stiff white sauce, some finely-chopped parsley, celery salt, pepper, and a dust of curry powder, and the mixture will be ready to use. Sweet sandwiches can be made in the same way, by substituting either jam or lemon-cheese curd for the meat.

BREAD AND CHEESE SANDWICHES.

Pound four ounces of grated Gruyère and mild Cheddar cheese (mixed in equal proportions) with an ounce of fresh butter; add a little French mustard, and season with salt and cayenne, then stir in one tablespoonful of thick cream. Spread the cheese mixture on slices of brown bread and butter, or toast (buttered), scatter some finely-shred celery over it, then close the sandwiches, and trim them neatly.

CHARLOTTE RUSSE.



IN the *Nineteenth Century* a somewhat weighty onslaught is made against feminine cycling in particular, and feminine athletics in general, by Dr. Arabella Kenealy, under the title of "Woman as an Athlete." Miss Kenealy holds that "we are somewhat in danger to-day of deifying muscle, muscle being properly a mere means to an end, a system of levers whose chief value lies in the purpose they subserve. The levers must be kept in order by due exercise and use for the means for which they are required. But modern feeling is in the direction of amassing muscles which shall enable their possessor to fell oxen or to beat pedestrian and cycling records." How this applies to woman-kind one cannot altogether see; the women riders who go for records may be counted on the fingers of one hand, and the premise has no application to the generality. Miss Kenealy proceeds to draw a picture of the athletic girl of the period as follows: "Her eyes are fine, her features are well modelled, her complexion is possibly too strong in its contrasting tones, her glance is unwavering and direct; she is a good-looking girl. But the haze, the elusiveness, the subtle suggestion of the face are gone; it is the landscape without atmosphere. Now one could paint her portrait with ease. Formerly only the most ingenious and sympathetic art could have reproduced her subtle and mysterious charm."

From this it would appear that the nebulous and the indefinite have more attractions for Miss Kenealy than the positively beautiful. Health is the primary attraction, physically speaking, of either man or woman. A good complexion redeems the plainest of faces, and sallowness will spoil the finest of features—save in a photograph. Now what, it may be asked, is better calculated to impart this halo of good health, always far more potent than the sickly

uncertainty beloved of Miss Kenealy, than cycling judiciously pursued? And this leads me to enquire whether that end is not attained by the average lady rider. It is not muscle to which she aspires, but reasonable and refreshing exercise. Of the hundreds of lady cyclists I have met, I have never known one of them evince a desire for muscular development or to amass colossal mileages. They follow the exercise for its own sake, and, as a rule, with due discretion; while so far as personal attractiveness is concerned, there is no more charming spectacle than that of a woman on wheel, well dressed and well mounted, provided she rides with the grace that comes of skill. Where a lady cyclist lacks grace is whenever, from sheer muscular incapacity, she has not the strength to ride without visible effort; whereas a normal amount of physical development refines, not coarsens, the outline of the figure, and adds a charm to her riding which the perfunctory rider can never attain.

A painful picture it is which Miss Kenealy further draws of the modern infant, of which she says that "all the resources of the dietist and chemist are taxed to appease the abnormal requirements of his capricious, incompetent stomach." Be that as it may, one fails to see how cycling can be regarded as the cause. Patent foods have been before the public for many more years than the cycle has been ridden by women, or for that matter than the delights of lawn tennis and golf have been enjoyed. If there be physical degeneration in our womankind, the cause must be sought elsewhere. One must take leave, however, to traverse the whole groundwork of Dr. Kenealy's indictment. The modern woman emphatically does not "regard muscle as her worthiest possession," and it has not been shown that the healthful exercise of which she is now permitted by custom to partake has done anything but improve her natural capacities, physical, mental, and moral alike.

More than ever does the consistent brake user marvel at the motives which lead many cyclists to dispense with that equipment. It is pitiful to note the way in which the brakeless rider funks a hill and falls behind those who, though less speedy, may be, on the level, have no fears as to availing themselves of the convenience of a down grade, because provided with efficient retarding power if occasion should require. At Easter-time I saw innumerable examples of this

in the course of a tandem ride to Bath and back, and particularly recollect one case in which a pair of "scorchers" on another tandem rushed by at a pace I had no desire to emulate. Ere they were far in front, however, they appeared all at once to hang back, whereat I scented a hill, and, on coming up to them at a corner, found such to be the case. Now although their tandem was provided with an apology for a brake in a pneumatic pattern, they were entirely unable to take the descent except at the slowest possible speed and with severe back-peddalling; whereas my lady partner and myself, who had been jogging comfortably along the level, were able to let our tandem go "all out" down the hill, in serene confidence due to the possession of a powerful rim brake. As a result we had gone more than a mile before the scorching crew again overtook us; and, as the latter fifty miles of the Bath road abounds in hills as steep as the one in question, this particular pair must have repeated the back-peddalling process to a degree which should—though I doubt whether it would—have converted them to a saner view of what is pleasurable riding.

Another instructive incident on the same journey was a narrow escape from being run into by a cyclist who was facing the wind, and whose vision was obscured by a cloud of dust. Had he not been riding on the very opposite side of the road to his own, thus being right in the track of approaching riders, he might have claimed some sympathy, but as it was he had only my good rim brake to thank that he avoided a smash-up in which he would hardly have come off best, considering the respective weights of a tandem and single safety.

Until this particular ride, by the way, I had thought that no one could achieve immortality nowadays, when things that are thaumaturgic are of such common occurrence. But the man who wrote "Daisy, Daisy" seems to have got very near the goal. Sixteen times in one day did the "bicycle made for two" refrain salute our ears, while on the second that total was more than doubled. On Bank Holiday we counted into the sixties; then we cast calculations to the winds. Before we embark on another tandem tour we shall hope that another song will have supplanted the eternal "Daisy" in the village urchin's mind.

THE PILGRIM.



"The Tyranny of Tears."

MR. HADDON CHAMBERS has reappeared in a blaze of glory. In "The Tyranny of Tears" he has written a delightful comedy of modern English life—one of the plays we have been waiting for. Though a comedy, though an amusing and entertaining play, beneath its lightness and its brightness is a serious subject; a phase of modern life is treated which is very real. Though the piece keeps you smiling continually, it is absolutely natural and far from laughable to the people on the stage. As Mr. Chambers said before the production of his piece, the fun is latent, part and parcel of its motive; there has been no effort to write comic scenes for the sake of comicality. On the contrary, as has been said, the plot is really far from humorous; but did the incidents take place in real life, while they would be close akin to tragedy to those whom they concerned, to the onlooker the funny side would be uppermost.

How admirably expressive is the title. "The Tyranny of Tears." The whole thing is explained by a phrase. "The Tyranny of Tears"! A strong man helpless, drowned beneath watery reproaches; a virile will subjugated by weak femininity. The husband, brilliant, manly, a good fellow, choked by the never-failing outburst of lachrymose emotion. And Mr. Chambers is far too accomplished a dramatist and observer of human nature to simplify matters by allowing the man's love for the woman to disappear. That would make things very much simpler; there would then be many remedies open to him. No; he loves her still, truly, ardently. How much easier, then, to give way in little things, forgetting that little things become big things if the perspective is changed. They love each other; he hates to hurt her; so he submits. Unconsciously, for the most part, though he has moments when his eyes are opened. He knows she loves him. So, while she gradually saps all of his life and absorbs it, while his old friends fall away, his masculine pleasures disappear—he submits. Whenever his wishes run counter to her whims, the argument is ended by tears—in her favour. "You no longer love me" is the phrase which always gives him his *coup de grace*.

So he drifts and drifts, and his soul is hardly his own. It is not always an unpleasant bondage—for he loves his wife. But she shows no quarter; she leaves him no loophole. Lacking a sense of humour, she does not see the selfishness, the egotism of

her conduct. She thinks that she is justified in all she does, because all she does is inspired by a wish to be always near him. She thinks him unnatural if he wants a few days' shooting, a week-end's yachting, an evening at the club. "You do not want me any more" is her victorious shaft. He surrenders at discretion. He does not know yet of the latent feeling of rancour, of resentment, which is growing up within him. Neither he or she knows that the glamour is being destroyed, the "nap worn off the velvet" by this tyranny of tears.

But then there is an awakening. An old friend returns, and sees the real state of affairs. He, without any animus or positive desire to do so, by his questions and his eyelids uplifted, shows the husband the fetters which bind him—the prison walls are stripped of their prettinesses. The truth is revealed. Then comes the tug-of-war. She is denied her own way; she can hardly believe it. She coaxes, she wheedles, she upbraids; she would weep, but he raises a dam against the flood and says that tears will mean his temporary disappearance. She is thunder-struck and prepares to leave him, being quite sure that he will relent and bid her stay at the price of his acquiescence. He does nothing of the sort. She goes. He becomes restless and unhappy; hints to his friend that it is all his doing; says what his friend told him he would say, that the upheaval in his domestic happiness is owing to his officious interference. It is all so true, so real and natural.

Certainly, the dramatist begs the question a little by removing the cause which led to their separation and so opening the way for compromise. To have pursued the subject to its bitter end would have meant starting with different premises. The wife would not have been given so plausible a reason for the quarrel. She should have had no shred of right on her side. Then what would have happened? The question would have been answered one way or the other. But then the play could not have been comedy; it would have had to be very serious drama indeed.

For the wife had cause for her objection to her husband's pretty private secretary. Though this young lady had no wrong notion in kissing his portrait, though her affection for him was of quite a platonic nature, and though he never regarded her as anything but a most useful machine—still his wife had tangible evidence to go on; she could not possibly be expected to know the real motives which inspired the other. So when she demands the dismissal of the girl, and he refuses, thinking this but another of her whims, and a fitting opportunity for the assertion of his independence, she is not wholly without right,

though whether or not she behaved naturally in refusing to tell her husband the reason of her request, is a moot point. One can argue both ways. So there is an *impasse* which lasts for a day, for the secretary leaves—to marry. The wife returns—the question has not been answered one way or the other. Till now, the victory is with neither combatant. A little later one sees that the triumph is his, for she expresses repentance and promises reform. Whether such a victory would be a lasting one would be a difficult thing to decide. But the dramatist has told his story and is quite justified in dropping the curtain.

He has written a sparkling play; one that amuses, entertains, and interests from start to finish; there is no complication of plot, no intrigue—all is natural, simple, straightforward. This is its great charm, we feel the reality of it and are convinced. Nor shall we do Mr. Haddon Chambers the injustice of thinking that the simplicity of his work proves it the less a brilliant piece of stagecraft. Its simplicity is a mark of the skill of the dramatist. He has given us the art which conceals art. It must have been a very difficult thing to write such a play, to keep the thing so well-sustained, to interest us without a single trick of the stage.

His dialogue, too, is witty and humorous, and smart without being in any way forced or stagey. Though all his people talk well, they talk like real people. His character-drawing is admirable. The private secretary is a little masterpiece. The thirteenth child of her parents, and they were poor; clever, ambitious, self-contained, but sunny, Hyacinth Woodward is one of the best stage figures the theatre has known for a long while. Wonderfully good, too, the cynical, kind-hearted fellow who marries her—the scene of his proposal is deliciously quaint and fresh. The husband, the wife, and the wife's father—are all "creations."

The piece could not have been better acted. The chief honours fall to Miss Maude Millett, whose Hyacinth was a really fine study; she caught the tone of a difficult character to a nicety, and brought out every point and phase of the part. Mr. Wyndham, Mr. Fred Kerr, Mr. Alfred Bishop, and Miss Mary Moore could not have been improved upon. Play-goers and play-lovers are in Mr. Chambers' debt for "The Tyranny of Tears."

DRAMATIC NOTES.

THE "revue," "Pot-Pourri," presented for the first time at the pretty Coronet Theatre at Notting Hill, about which the elect were talking as volubly as though it were a West End "function," proved to be somewhat of a disappointment. It was not, properly speaking, a "revue" at all. It was the usual "musical comedy" with the characters merely named after characters in popular plays. It was quite bright and merry in a provincial way, and it was very cleverly interpreted by Miss Claire Romaine, Mr. Farren Soutar, and one or two others; but it was not a "revue," and Mr. Tanner, the author, cannot claim to have revived that form of entertainment in England. Mr. Lambelet, the composer of the music, and Mr. Risque, the writer of the verse, may be heartily commended for the quality of their work. There is a song in "Pot-Pourri" about an amorous housemaid which ere long will be whistled all over London, if one is not very much mistaken.

One was not surprised to find that Mr. D'Oyly Carte had something to say in reference to the proposed musical play for Mr. Augustin Daly, which was to have been written by Mr. James Davis (Owen Hall) and composed by Sir Arthur Sullivan. Sir Arthur is under agreement to do no such work for any other manager without Mr. Carte's consent; and the latter, in his letter to the Press, said nothing about having given it. We can quite understand Sir Arthur's willingness to write for Mr. Daly; but we do not quite see why he should set to music a libretto by Mr. "Owen Hall." Sir Arthur is a musician of the very first rank, and his "mate" should be of equal artistic standing. Now the gentleman in part responsible for "An Artist's Model," "A Gaiety Girl," "The Geisha," and "A Greek Slave," is, no doubt, a versatile and "smart" writer for the stage on his own plane; but that can hardly be considered the plane of Sir Arthur Sullivan, Mr. Gilbert, Captain Basil Hood, and one or two others one could mention.

Who is to have the honour of Anglicising the greatest play of our generation, "Cyrano de Bergerac," of adapting for the English stage the French masterpiece? Mr. Wyndham promises to present the work at the opening of his new theatre in Charing Cross Road. It was generally supposed that Mr. Stuart Ogilvie, the cultured and earnest writer for the stage, the author of "Hypatia" and "The Sin of St. Hulda"—both works in which beauty of language and elevation of thought were pleasingly prominent—would have been thus distinguished. It was known that Sir Henry had placed the commission in Mr. Ogilvie's hands. But Mr. Wyndham then acquired the work from Sir Henry, and now other names are mentioned in this connection. Among them is that of Mr. Louis Parker, another dramatist with the gift of charm and beauty in language. It is evidently a difficult task, this rendering into English the work of M. Rostand. There is already more than one translation of it in book form; but not one of these is altogether satisfactory.

It is rumoured that Mr. Rudyard Kipling may write the Christmas fairy entertainment for the Lyceum Theatre. But, while this rumour was given publicity in a quarter usually well informed, I should not be surprised if it were based on an error. Mr. Kipling is averse to writing for the theatre. He has been approached more than once to that end, but he has never met the advances with any degree of cordiality. He would like to write for the stage, but he feels that he has no "call" to express himself through the medium of drama. This statement was made to me by a very prominent actor-manager who had himself approached Mr. Kipling. Had the author wished to make his appearance "on the boards," he could certainly have wished for no more dignified or popular an

interpreter. But he refused. The announcement made in our contemporary arose, probably, from a very pardonable misapprehension of a guarded statement made by the management of the Lyceum. They said that they had approached one of the giant figures of modern literature. Just at the present such an expression points almost irresistibly to Mr. Kipling—and thence, I should think, arose the misapprehension. As a matter of fact, the Lyceum directorate had asked Mr. J. M. Barrie to provide for them their Christmas play. He is certainly a giant also, but our contemporary did not think of his name in this connection. This is only a theory of mine, and I may be mistaken. But putting two and two together, that is the probable explanation of a startling announcement. One wishes it might be true. As one of our *causeurs* has observed, the author of "The Jungle Book" should be able to give the children, both of a younger and an older growth, a very delightful fairy-play.

There is a great probability that, ere long, we shall have the pleasure of welcoming again among us that clever actress and beautiful woman, Miss Julia Arthur, who, not so very long ago, made so pleasing an impression in Sir Henry Irving's company at the Lyceum. She, an American, has since been acting in the United States, playing the heroine in "A Lady of Quality," and other characters; but it is said that she has secured the English rights in Bergerat's "Plus que Reine," which was produced in Paris with much success the other evening, and will appear in London as the heroine Josephine. She has offered Mr. Kyle Bellew a prominent part in the piece. PHŒBUS.



A BANK HOLIDAY is not for the most part a suitable occasion to pursue the wily fox, for that sport-giving animal simply revels in "splendid isolation," which he is scarcely likely to obtain when the county lanes are flooded with holiday-making humanity. On Easter Monday, however,



E. T. Sheaf. PICKING UP THE LINE.

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the meet of the Southdowns had been cunningly arranged at the Swan Inn, Chailey, and this hotel being far from "the busy haunts of men," our sport was not greatly interfered with, except on one occasion near Barcombe, where a goodly company expanded their urban lungs in our quarry's face. After all, however, he only



E. T. Sheaf. DRAWING THE GORSE.

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afforded his unwelcome satellites a little harmless amusement, and as he at length got well away, it is not for us fox-hunters to grudge these town-bred folk just one sight of the sport that we enjoy for most days in the week during half the year.

But to return to the meet at the Swan Inn. The first order to be given was for the drawing of the neighbouring covert, Balneath Wood, and scarcely

had hounds effected an entrance before a fox was afoot. He ran at once to Oldpark Wood, and then somewhat mysteriously disappeared; and although Fred cast right along the Ouse Valley, he was unable to recover the line. A long draw now became necessary, for Lodge Wood, the Newick Park, and Sutton Hall coverts were all drawn blank, and it was not until Beech Wood was reached that a find was proclaimed. Our quarry was soon away, and took us over a tricky piece of country to the little coverts to the north-west of Barcombe, where he was headed several times, and after first running in one direction and then in another, he at length found an "open door" on the south-west side of the wood. Hounds were soon in hot pursuit, and chased their fox right merrily to Warringore Wood over a pleasant line of country. Patiently the pack worked out the line through this large covert, and then ran out into the open towards the Downs. Slow hunting was now the order of the day, and when the foot of Blackcap Hill was reached hounds threw up. Fred cast them forward along the top of the hills, and now a curious little hunting drama, or rather tragedy, was enacted, Mr. Whitfeld, jun., and myself being, I believe, the only onlookers. As the pack disappeared over the summit, I noticed a single hound giving tongue in a little dingle to my left. Thinking that the fox might be concealed in the small patch of covert that grows here, I looked from my commanding position into it, but seeing Mr. Whitfeld hard by, and observing no signs of our quarry, I continued the ascent. A few moments afterwards the same hound spoke in tones of conviction, and looking down I saw our hunted fox just outside the covert, pursued by the bitch in question; she bowled him over in an instant, and then, as if by magic, another hound appeared upon the scene, and the two speedily left their victim half dead on the ground, and refused him the finishing stroke. Mr. Whitfeld now got off his horse, and administered the *coup de grace* with his hunting-crop. After several minutes our "Who-whoops" brought the remainder of the pack to their prospective meal. One peculiar point I noticed in reference to the death of this fox. Just as the first hound tackled him he gave forth a most horrid yell of mingled fear and rage. This, I believe, is most unusual, for as far as my experience and that of others goes, foxes generally die in eloquent silence. Possibly the cry of hounds prevents one on some occasions from hearing the cries of the vanquished.

On Wednesday the meet was at Framfield, and a blank day was the result, I hear. Friday saw the hunt at Kentons, near Henfield, and the Woodmancote spinneys were as usual the first to receive attention, but as they were drawn blank a move was made to Wick Wood; but it was not until the adjoining



E. T. Sheaf.

NO SCENT.

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covert, Shave's Wood, was reached that a fox was found. He proved to be a twisting brute, and, after a couple of turns in the direction of Albourne, gave his pursuers the slip, the latter being greatly handicapped by a lack of scent. The cold showers to which we had been treated during the morning now came down with renewed vigour, and a long, dispiriting blank draw, which included Hooe and Tottington Woods, ensued. From this I was at length glad to escape.

Bright sunshine greeted me as I set out on Saturday last for Beddingham, but before I got half a mile from home a terrific hailstorm made its unwelcome presence felt. I record this fair sample of weather in order to illustrate the conditions under which our sport of Saturday was conducted. The hills with their gorse coverts above Beddingham were drawn blank, as was Firle Plantation; but a capital gallop, the best of the week, was brought off from Selmeaton Wood. Hounds commenced by running towards the Downs, when information was received that a fox, probably the hunted one, had been viewed



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IN AT THE DEATH.

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ON THE DOWNS.

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at Alceston. A cast in that direction did not reveal much, so the Master went on to draw a little spinney near Selmeaton and the railway line. Just as hounds had returned a not at home verdict a view-holloa was heard, and we, in all probability, got on to the line of our former quarry. A capital pace was maintained as far as Charlton Hill, which was mounted by hounds at only hunting speed. Once on top they began to race away once more, and proceeded as far west as Beddingham Hill. A left-hand turn was now made, but at this juncture hounds were unfortunately robbed of the blood they so well deserved by a heavy storm, which completely obliterated all traces of scent.

Just one more day or two is the desire of every hunting man at the close of the season, and though the Midlands will see me no more till next autumn, there are other packs within reach of summer quarters still going on, and I managed to put in a varied week's work. First the Fareham and Gosport



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OVER THE BROOK.

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Beagles, a little pack which provides sport for the country-folk of South Hants, and the subalterns from Gosport. The Master and huntsman is Mr. Nugent, and the whole establishment is carried on on very sporting lines. One feature of this hunt is the number of lady members, and the keen way they follow the chase on foot. The last time I was out I watched the field crossing a ditch and hedge that required a good jump. Four girls and about the same number of young men attempted it; one of the men fell, but the four sportswomen landed in great style. One of these ladies, Miss Leggatt, whose brother used to go well with the Southwold, is said to be as good across country on horseback as on foot. There are a fair number of hares in the country, and the pack is well supported by subscriptions. It is quite a model for hunts of its kind, and there is nothing more delightful than running after beagles. It teaches one much of the working of hounds, and helps to keep the weight down. The sport of beagling has been very popular in Leicestershire of late years, Mr. Otho Paget having an excellent pack at Thorpe Satchville, and Mr. Charles MacNeill another not far off, at Carlton Curlew. The Tedworth country still wants a Master, but I think the committee were wise not to divide it. With all its disadvantages, great sport has been seen over the downs and in the vale both in the days of the great Mr. Assheton Smith and in those of his successors. Dividing a county creates many jealousies and difficulties.

Rather an amusing experiment was the match between the three soldier packs of draghounds to which I was bidden on Friday, April 7th. Each of the packs—the Royal Artillery, the Staff College, and the Household Brigade—sent three couples of hounds, and the winners turned up in the Royal Artillery. The distance was four miles, and there was great interest displayed by the followers in the fortunes of the hounds belonging to their several packs. A kind friend mounted me, and perhaps I may say truthfully that I did not see the finish, and that the fault was not entirely on the horse's side. I managed, however, to arrive at Easthampstead Park (Lord Downshire's) in time to hear, if not to see, the result. The Royal Artillery pack must be a fast one, and perhaps that may account for the fact that "gunners" are such hard men to hounds. Most of those I have known have habitually ridden as if they had a spare neck in their pockets.

I hear that the South Coast Staghounds had a tremendously fast gallop last week. The hind was blanced after being uncartered, and ran right back to the pack, which, getting away at her heels, fairly beat the horses. The hind managed to get clear away, and was taken in orthodox fashion near Pulborough. She must be a good deer to stand hustling. I have known them refuse to run altogether when they have not had the usual law.

A friend of mine who lives in Lord Harrington's country writes me of a somewhat novel ending to the season with the South Notts, which, by the way, has been a good one. After the usual point-to-point, two men and two ladies

started off as hares to lead all and sundry across country for a paper-chase. The point was Captain Sherbrooke's house at Oxton, and a most exciting run took place, the "hares" just managing to avoid capture. This reminds us of the old days, when, after hunting, if the sport had been bad, someone would hold up a cap and cry, "Who's for Melton?" and the bolder spirits would lark home. In a book, now somewhat rare, "Nimrod's Hunting Reminiscences," is a most spirited illustration of this by Alken, the starting-point being apparently the neighbourhood of Tilton.

Calcutta is to have a pack of hounds, which they have not had since the present Duke of Bedford, then Lord Herbrand Russell, and aide-de-camp to the Viceroy, kept a pack of foxhounds and a pack of boarhounds, hunting the jackal with the former, and the wild boar with the latter. Hunting in India can be made a capital sport, but everything depends on the Master working hard and inspecting every detail of the kennel management.

X. & V.



ALTHOUGH there was a plethora of sport of different sorts and kinds last week, it consisted mostly of hunt steeplechases and small meetings, which, important as they no doubt were to those interested, will have been well discussed and almost forgotten by the time these notes appear in print, and are, therefore, hardly worth writing about here. Indeed, so far as races likely to have any bearing on future events, or individual performances of sufficient importance to be worth remembering, are concerned, it was a singularly empty period. Of course there was a good afternoon's racing at Kempton Park on Easter Monday, on which day and the following a number of the best jumpers in training were seen out at Manchester, but there was very little doing during the remainder of the week, except for the hunt and point-to-point meetings to which I have already alluded. The principal event of the Sunbury Meeting, the Queen's Prize of 1,000 sovs., run over a mile and a-half, was won by the four year old Tophet, who started favourite and won by a length from Golden Bridge, of the same age, giving him 28lb. The winner is a nicely-bred horse, being by Kendal—Paradise, by Sterling out of Casuistry, by The Miner, son of Rataplan. He is, therefore, very inbred to Birdcatcher, with good strains of Thormanby, Sweetmeat, and Touchstone, so that he ought to be a better horse than he is; but although he won his race, the performance was nothing very wonderful, especially as it is probable that Golden Bridge would have successfully presented him with the 28lb. he was asked to had he only done his best.

The running of Tophet here, and of St. Fort at Alexandra Park, make it look as if Clipstone's running at Nottingham was not so very bad after all. It is easy, on the Nottingham and Lincoln form of Clipstone, St. Fort, The Shaughraun, and Tophet, to make out the last of these some 28lb. behind the first, and, if this is correct, he cannot be far behind Golden Bridge on the Kempton Park form. At the same time, Mr. Leopold de Rothschild's good-looking four year old undoubtedly cut it when asked to win his race, and calculations founded on the running of this class of animal are usually misleading. The last race of the day, the Rothschild Welter Plate of a mile, was won by Mr. Leopold de Rothschild's Jaquemart, a horse for whom I have always had a good word in these notes. He had already this season won a Queen's Plate at Lincoln, and is doubtless an improved horse. He had to be ridden to stall off Champ de Mars, to whom he was giving 4lb. for the year between them, and this last-named good-looking, powerful four year old has evidently done so well during the winter that he also will probably be worth following in handicap company during the present season. These two very useful horses—Jaquemart and Champ de Mars—are both by Martagon, a very favourite sire of mine, who is by Bend Or out of Tiger Lily, by Macaroni out of Polly Agnes, and was himself a very high-class race-horse in a good year. He also had another winner on the same day in Egmont, out of Egentyne (the dam of Briar Root), who is a good-looking youngster, and took the South-Western T.V.O. Selling Plate by a couple of lengths, being subsequently sold cheaply for 400 guineas. He is not unlikely to soar higher than selling plates some day. That Martagon will make a name for himself as a sire I have always thought probable, and it already looks as if this is going to be a great year for him. His successes should also call attention to his own brother, Giganteum, a very nice horse indeed, belonging to Mr. James Snarry, and standing at that gentleman's stud at Musley Bank.

There is no breeder in England who goes in for the business more thoroughly, and with less regard for expense, than does Mr. James Platt, at the Bruntwood Stud in Cheshire. His collection of beautifully-bred mares has more than once been described in the pages of COUNTRY LIFE, as also has his grandly-bred sire Kendal, whom he brought over at a very big price indeed from Ireland, and who promptly justified the outlay by being the sire of the Two Thousand, Derby, and St. Leger winner, Galtee More, and going straight to the top of the list of winning sires. The Bruntwood yearlings too have made big prices, and yet they have not won races. There may be several reasons for this, and there is no doubt that breeders who sell their yearlings are in some ways at a disadvantage compared with those who train them and run them themselves. At any rate, Mr. Platt thinks so, and he last year determined to send his yearlings to Newmarket to be trained, instead of selling them at Doncaster, as it had previously been his custom to do. This he did, with the result that one of them has already won a race, and we shall probably see some of her winners turning up soon from amongst this well-bred lot of youngsters. In the meantime Kendal is going very strong in other directions, and whilst his son Tophet was winning the Queen's Prize at Kempton Park on Easter Monday, his daughter Breemount's Pride was busy beating a great field of jumpers in the Lancashire Handicap Steeplechase at Manchester.

When Mr. George Edwardes bought Breemount's Pride, at a big price, in Ireland, it was said that she and Gentle Ida were the two best steeplechase mares ever known in that country, and they finished first and second for the big Manchester chase last week. There was a time when Breemount's Pride would not have got into this or any other handicap with so light a weight as 10st., or been entitled to receive 33lb. from her fellow-countrywoman, Gentle Ida, but, unfortunately, after her present owner bought her she became a bad roarer, and

could not win a race. She has lately had a tube put in her throat, however, with the most successful results, and being thus enabled to show her true form, it is not surprising that, with so light a weight on her six year old back, she showed a clean pair of heels to the high-class field which opposed her. Among the most distinguished of her rivals were the Grand National winner, Manifesto, 12st. 12lb.; Gentle Ida, 12st. 5lb.; Keelson, 11st. 6lb.—all these previous winners of this race; Lotus Lily, unlucky to come to grief in this year's Grand National; the French mare Pistache, who was going remarkably well when she fell in the same race; Glen Royal, the winner of this year's National Hunt Steeplechase at Hurst Park; and Lahore, much talked about at one time for the big Liverpool chase. The last-named carried a lot of Irish money, but Gentle Ida was naturally made favourite, and Keelson was also well backed by North Country sportsmen, whilst 20 to 1 was going begging about the roaring Breemount's Pride, who, it will be remembered, fell, when heavily backed, in this same race a year ago. The Weyhill pair were unlucky, as Glen Royal falling brought down Manifesto; but it may have made no difference to the result, as I doubt if Mr. Bulteel's gelding could give Mr. Bottomley's mare 7lb. over this course, and she in her turn failed to give 33lb. to Breemount's Pride, who, thanks to her light weight and the tube in her throat, ran on, and after a fine race beat the other Irish mare by three-quarters of a length.

This being, with the exception of one more at Sandown Park, the last big steeplechase of the season, it is hardly worth while drawing morals from its result. At the same time it may be worth while remembering, when another National Hunt season comes round, that Gentle Ida proved in this race that her Grand National backers were unlucky when she over-jumped herself at Valentine's Brook, that Breemount's Pride will probably be almost as good as ever she was, and that the much-vaunted Lahore—a remarkably good-looking horse, by the way—will have to be seen jumping his fences in much better style than he does now before he will be worth backing to do all that his admirers said he could not long ago. Keelson, who was going well, ricked himself badly about a mile from home, and was so seriously injured internally that he died soon afterwards. This was a serious loss to his owner, Mr. C. J. Cunningham, as the well-bred son of Panzerschiff and Red Shoes, by Galopin, who was bred by Lord Zetland in 1892, was a bit more than useful, and would have won plenty more races but for this unlucky *contretemps*. Pistache also fell, about a mile from home, much to the regret of most people, who would have liked to see her sporting owner, Count de Geloës, rewarded for his pluck in bringing her over to this country and riding her himself in our Grand National.

And, writing of mares, what grand brood mares those two, Gentle Ida and Breemount's Pride, would make, only, unfortunately, the last-named, being affected in her wind, has little or no value as such. And yet plenty of noisy mares have bred good race-horses, with no trace of their own infirmity, and perhaps Mr. Edwardes's great, fine mare will do the same some day, if she ever gets the chance. I have never believed that roaring is hereditary, except so far as the conformation which predisposes to it may be so; and the Stud Book is full of the names of horses and mares who, although undoubted roarsers themselves, did not breed stock unsound in that respect.

I am reminded that Hawfinch should have been added to the list of those whose pedigrees were discussed in last week's issue of COUNTRY LIFE. It would be difficult to name a much better bred horse than his sire, Goldfinch, who is by the mighty Ormonde (Birdcatcher on Sweetmeat, and coming, on his dam's side, of the famous Agnes family) out of Thistle (dam of Common and Throstle), who gives Ormonde back his Sweetmeat strain, and brings in one of Touchstone to nick with his Birdcatcher blood. His dam, Chalk Hill Blue, is by Edward the Confessor, son of Hermit and the Princess of Wales, by Stockwell, out of a daughter of Cardinal York, by Newminster. She is, therefore, inbred to Newminster on her sire's side, through his softest son Hermit, and this blood grafted on to that of Bend Or is not calculated to produce a very hardy result. This may account for the fact that Hawfinch went all to pieces last spring, during a preparation that would perhaps have hardly got a horse of the Ravensbury type fit. I believe Hawfinch to be a good horse, whose Birdcatcher, Thormanby, Ion, and Melbourne blood ought to make him stay, at any rate, fairly well, in spite of his two crosses of Newminster, one of which, by the way, is combined with the stout strains of Stockwell and Melbourne, through Edward the Confessor's dam, the Princess of Wales. If he is kept fresh and well, and not overdone with work, during the present season, I shall expect him to pay for following, though the moment he begins to look light and dry I shall know that it is time to leave him alone.



THERE is probably no older, and certainly no better-managed, regimental race-meeting than that of the Royal Regiment of Artillery, which was held at Aldershot on Saturday last, in weather which unfortunately made a fur coat a more desirable article of dress than a thin racing-jacket. Nevertheless there was plenty of sport, which was evidently highly interesting to the sisters, aunts, and cousins of the various competing "Captains," the hospitality was what it always is when "gunners" are the hosts, the arrangements generally were in the hands of Colonel Toogood—I need say no more—and all seemed to enjoy themselves in spite of alternating snow, rain, and hail, and all the time a bitter east wind. There was a time when this meeting used to be held on various courses—at Bromley, Croydon, and Eltham, all close to the headquarters of the regiment at Woolwich; then at Sandown Park; afterwards over a private course on the Plumstead marshes, hard by the Arsenal gates; and lastly at Aldershot, where it now seems likely to remain. Possibly no better choice could have been made, firstly, because Aldershot is full of "gunners," and is now the headquarters of the Royal Horse Artillery, secondly, because it is easily accessible from the majority of places where the various batteries of the regiment

are stationed, and thirdly, because it is one of the best courses to be found anywhere. To anyone who remembers this course as it was in the early seventies, the improvements which have been made since then must be simply surprising. The sandy soil, too, on which it has been laid out, is almost always good "going," either in dry weather or in wet, and the fences are not only remarkably well made, but are also of just the right size, neither too large nor too small. The "gunners," past and present, mustered in great force, accompanied by all their female belongings, whilst there was a fair sprinkling of the general public as well, and the hill from which most people saw the sport was crowded throughout the afternoon.

Proceedings began with the Royal Artillery Welter Steeplechase, which resulted in a great race between Mr. Courage's Freedom, Major Darby's Pathrick, and Captain Breeks's Sparrow, of whom the first-named just beat the other two, who dead-heated for second place.

In consequence of some of the events of the recent Cavalry Brigade Meeting having to be postponed, the 13th Hussars' Hunters' Challenge Cup and the Carabiniers' Challenge Cup were added to the "gunners" card, the former being won by Captain Wiggins' Star, who started a hot favourite, by a length and a-half, and the latter by Mr. Collis's Faith, also an even-money favourite. The principal event of the afternoon was, of course, the Royal Artillery Gold Cup, which used to be run for by some fair-class chasers in days gone by. It is now, however, reserved for hunters, and the field that went to the post for it on Saturday last looked more like catching foxes than winning races. The winner turned up in Captain Brock's Lady Henbury, who, well ridden by Mr. Tudor, jumped in faultless fashion all the way, and won pulling her pilot out of the saddle. Oddly enough, it was supposed that she would not stay the three miles, but probably she is a bit better class than the others, and at any rate she won as she liked, Major Waldron, who once won the Grand Military Gold Cup with that charming little Irish mare Lobelia, being second with Cardinal, a good-looking hunter ridden by Captain Crockett, and Mr. J. A. Hobson third on King Stephen.

Mr. Dyas's useful horse Velox, a half-brother to Gentle Ida, was naturally made favourite for the United Service Handicap Steeplechase, especially as he had Mr. R. Ward in the saddle. He looks none too sound, however, in front, and in the race he always seemed afraid to stand away and jump his fences as he should, with the result that the 2 to 1 chance, Tame Fox, beat him by ten lengths. For the Ubique Plate, for past and present "gunners," Everton, who is a bit useful, and ran well at the late Grand Military Meeting, was made a hot favourite at 7 to 4 on, the natty little Zacharias, who is by the well-bred Velleda, being the only other backed. The latter looked big, however, as if he wanted a few more gallops, and although he jumped well and quickly all the way, he tired in the last half mile, and suffered a six lengths' defeat from the favourite. The Royal Artillery Light-weight Steeplechase was won by Mr. Birch's Buckingham, and so ended a most successful meeting, of which the weather was the only "crab," and for the success of which the thanks of all "gunners" are due to their excellent and painstaking secretary and manager, Colonel S. H. Toogood, who generally had a horse of his own running at the meeting not so many years ago.

OUTPOST



SOME IRISH GAME

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—About fifty years ago the quail was common enough in Ireland, and in some of the midland and southern counties there were no partridges. With the advent of the partridge the quail seemed to disappear, and many people think that the larger bird drove its miniature away. It is more likely, however, that it was a change of climate, or some such cause, which occasioned this, as it is well known that the quail is one of the most pugnacious of birds, and it is highly improbable it would give way to a rival without a tough battle. The depopulation of Ireland, and the consequent wiping away of the many little patches of cultivated ground in which the quail delighted, doubtless had a good deal to say to the disappearance of the bird. In Wexford, the King's and Queen's Counties, an occasional bevy of quail was to be met with in the early sixties, and the pretty "wet-weather" note of the bird was frequently to be heard in the spring and early summer. But now, unless to very few of the older inhabitants, the cry is unknown. In the County Wexford, till a few seasons ago, in one particular locality a few birds were to be found, and a bevy was generally brought out on a certain hill near Gorey, but of late years they have completely disappeared. In the year 1897 a goodly number of migrant quail made Ireland their summer quarters, and it was hoped that they were going to make Erin their permanent home, but with the winter they all cleared off. Attempts have from time to time been made to reintroduce this pretty little bird into Ireland, but these attempts have been made in such a casual, disorganised way, that there could not be much hope of success. Mr. Percy Bicknell (late of Sydenham), who has a nice little estate in the Lower Ormond district of North Tipperary, turned down a number of quail a few years ago, and, though they were constantly seen during that summer and autumn, they all left with the approach of winter. Still, there is no reason why the reintroduction of the bird into Ireland should not be attended with success. Where the quail formerly made Ireland its permanent home there ought not to be the same difficulty in reintroducing it as if a stranger to the soil. A bird which would be a great addition to Irish game, and which one would think there should not be much trouble about, is the blackcock. Scotland is its pet country, but in several parts of England it thrives well; in Ireland it has never been a success, though frequent attempts have been made to introduce it. Parts of the North and West of Ireland should be admirably adapted to this bird, but somehow, though repeatedly tried, it has never taken to the Green Isle, and, at present, it is not supposed that there is a single bird of this species at large in the island. On the Duke of Abercorn's estates in Donegal and Tyrone, many years ago, elaborate experiments were made to introduce black game, but the attempt proved futile. A number of birds were brought from Scotland and turned out in what were thought to be the most suitable localities.

The birds remained for a season or two, but never bred, and gradually disappeared, either migrating to their "native heath" or straying off to fall to the gun of the prowler. If, instead of turning out old birds, the eggs of black game could be got and hatched out in the district where the birds were to remain, there would be a better chance of success. Probably the food supply in Ireland is not just the thing to satisfy the taste of Tetrao tetrix. All the same, the experiment ought to be well worth the attention of game preservers, if Ireland is to be made the happy hunting ground of the shooter which some people expect it may yet be.—T. S. B.

MERLINS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—In common with others interested in falconry I am much obliged to Mr. Newman for his further explanations re hacking and training of merlins. Of course, when it is a question of having merlins without hacking, or having none at all, any falconer would have no hesitation in preferring the former. I am aware of what Mr. Harting has done in keeping hawks in town, and flying them to the lure in Hyde Park or Regent's Park, much to the amazement of the Cockneys who were fortunate enough to witness it, but I am not aware that these hawks ever did much in the way of taking quarry, which after all is the great thing to be aimed at. The lack of exercise and play at hawk must be a severe handicap against the hawk's adroitness when she starts work in the field. Tamer she may be, doubtless. I am very pleased to learn that Mr. Newman has succeeded where others have failed, viz., in getting merlins to "wait on." At times I have got them to follow me across country for a couple of miles or so, but although sharp set and on the look-out for food or quarry they never waited on as a peregrine or hobby would, but flew from one tree to another, keeping pace with me as I walked. I should still like to hear of Mr. Newman's doings in the field with his merlins and the records they made in kills. Perhaps he may be induced to give another article on this in your paper.—ROBERT GARDNER.

THE FLIGHT OF CURLEW.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Referring to your remarks on the migration of curlew in COUNTRY LIFE of March 25th, I may say that for many years past I have watched the flights of curlew during the greater part of the month of March and early in April. They always fly at a very great height, sometimes quite out of sight, and ever in the one direction, viz., north-east. Their wild cries may be heard at all hours of the day and night as they pass along in small companies, often only in pairs. Would it not be of interest to get some of your readers on the West Coast of England to write and mention if they have noticed these birds in their onward flight, thus, if possible, to trace them across country to their ultimate destination? The usual summer visitors seem somewhat late in their arrival this year in this neighbourhood (County Clare, side of Shannon). I only heard the chiff-chaff on the 31st ult., more than a week later than in most years. The grasshopper warbler is another visitor here yearly, but I have not heard its curious note yet.—HENRY MARTIN.

SHOOTING OTTERS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I see that three otters were shot at Sunbury, and that three more have been trapped since, not far off on the Thames, and that the trapper, who is employed by a fishery society, hopes to kill another. It strikes me that this is exactly as bad as killing falcons and eagles, and that the same feeling which protects the one should protect the other. If otters are too numerous, why not trap them in box traps (instead of in gins, which break the poor beasts' legs) and sell them? They will always fetch a good price.—OTTER.

AN OTTER AS COMPANION.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—I have read with great interest the article on "Otters in the Water" in COUNTRY LIFE ILLUSTRATED of February 11th, and hope I am not troubling you very much by asking you a few questions. Since reading the article I have thought I should like to try to keep one if, as you say, they are very affectionate and can be taught to follow one like a dog. I have for a long time wanted a pet "out of the ordinary," and from your article an otter seems just what I should like. If I could manage to get one, and teach him to follow me, would any strange dog be likely to "go for him" that I might happen to meet on the road? And would he be all right fastened up, say, to a dog kennel at night or any time when I could not very well do with him? He could have a good long chain, since they are so restless. Could you please tell me what would be the best way of trying to get one? Advertising in the papers? If so, could you tell me what paper would be the best, and what do you think I should have to pay for one? I have been used to keeping birds and animals, from "hawks down to white mice." We have a very big river here (Stour). If I could get one, and I went near it, would he be all right if I coupled him to a terrier? I can quite understand if one got in the water and got a fit of disobedience, he would take some getting back, especially with a river like this, which is about half a mile across when the tide comes up. It must be a young one, I should say, to get him properly tame and obedient.—T. NOEL FAWCETT.

[Perhaps some of our readers could answer this enquiry.—ED.]

TO KEEP OFF TRAMPS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Permit me to thank your correspondents for taking the trouble to reply to my recent enquiries. I need not apologise for introducing the subject, which is an appropriate one for your publication, and of general interest to those who reside in the country, and the problem of how best to deal with these pests of rural life has yet to be successfully solved. The suggestion to "offer work" cannot always be adopted, especially when the master of the house is often away from home, and in any event it is a nuisance to be troubled on the point. I do not quite follow the hints as to bloodhounds. Does your correspondent suggest that they should be allowed to roam loose about the ground, or merely tied up on the premises? Would not a good mastiff do equally well? I have heard that vagrants have a peculiar language of their own, which they occasionally express by certain mysterious signs or characters, and it is possible that the use of the one referred to in your issue of the 1st inst. may have the desired effect; however that may be, I propose to give it a trial.—RUSTIC.

[It is well to see the local inspector of police and to have a thorough understanding with him on this subject. The local regulations for dealing with tramps vary. But whatever they are, it is as well for residents and police to work in accord. Tramps soon hear of the alliance and give the house a wide berth.—ED.]

LIZARDS AS PETS.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Can you or any reader kindly tell me anything about lizards as pets? Can they be kept in England without artificial heat? What food should be given them, and are they best kept under glass?—A. L.

[Under glass? Yes. Vivaria, as they are called, are sold at any shop where birds, goldfish, etc., are kept. St. Martin's Lane is the great place for these shops, or there are other and, perhaps, cleaner shops further West. The digestion of lizards is very slow, so that they do not need frequent meals; they hibernate in the cold weather, and in winter they scarcely need feeding at all. Flies and insects are their chief food, but if you give them some fresh turf on sunny days, they will find insects in almost sufficient quantities for themselves; but it is kinder to eke this out with some so-called "ants' eggs." Probably any of the European lizards would live in a vivarium in an English house or conservatory without artificial heat. It is best to bring them to England in the summer, when the English sun has some heat, for if brought over as soon as the spring sun has revived them in their native haunts, they are apt to feel the cold, and going back to the state of hibernation seems injurious to them. There are, of course, several species of lizards that have their habitat in England. The great thing they want is sun, so that London is the worst possible place to take them to. Still, they will live there, but it is doubtful whether they enjoy their life. They should always have a piece of dry turf to make holes in to run to when they want shelter.—Ed.]

PIGEON-NETTING IN THE PYRENEES.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—There is a sport, or a business, that they practise in this country—that is to say, in the Pyrenees—an account of which I am sure might interest your readers, if only I can make it one half as interesting as the topic deserves. There is a pass in the mountains not very far from where I am writing which is right in the flight-line of the migratory pigeons. I am not certain of the species of these birds. They appear to me something between our wood-pigeon and a dove. But the exact species does not matter. It is the way of catching them that is interesting. At one point this pass narrows down very much, to within a foyds breadth or so, and just at the narrowest part it so happens that there are three fir trees. The birds come in a great flock, winging their way down the pass. On either side, for more than a mile from the narrowest part, the sides of the pass are lined by Basques, who drive the flying birds, making them converge, by means chiefly of whistling. But there appears to be no trouble about this—the birds will willingly follow the line of the pass. When they come to the narrowest part of the pass they are flying at just such a height as would take them over the tops of the fir trees. Between these fir trees the natives have fixed great clap-nets, ready to ensnare any bird that will be kind enough to come to them. But why should any? The flock is aiming to go over the tree tops. But the cunning Basques have a way of bringing them down. In the fir trees are set up little platforms concealed from the sight of the birds. On one platform sits the man who will pull the clap-net down at the right time. Another man has in his hand a great curved bit of wood, like a rough boomerang. Now when the birds come flying down the pass notice is given from the far end by bugle. The man with the boomerang is ready. As the pigeons come near the trees, flying now in a close group, he hurls this boomerang downward from his platform. By reason of its peculiar shape it first goes downwards a few yards, then swoops up again, in a soaring manner, high into the air. The pigeons see it. In their hurry it looks to them exactly like a great hawk rising for its "stoop" amongst them. Instinctively, and as if with one

volition, the whole flock dives down to escape the hawk's attack, dives down among the tree stems, dives into the very mouth of the clap-net, which the engineer claps down; and this goes on, day after day, during all the time of the pigeons' fighting—that is to say, roughly, during all the month of October. In this way the natives will catch, say, 30,000 pigeons in the month. It is very interesting and very ingenious. Any one that likes to take a very little trouble can see it. Probably it is a unique sight. It is not likely that anywhere else one will find the combination of natural circumstances abetted by such ingenious artifice, which can alone make such pigeon-catching possible.—BASSES-PYRENEES.

THE PUNCH-BOWLS ON THE BIARRITZ GOLF COURSE.

[TO THE EDITOR OF "COUNTRY LIFE."]

SIR,—Your paper gives us such interesting accounts now and again of the curious way in which water works through the earth, and raises such curious (to the plain man) problems about it—as, for instance, the suggestion of one correspondent that the Eastern Counties depend for their water supply on the rainfall of Devon and Cornwall—that it may, perhaps, amuse you to hear of some singular phenomena that are to be seen on the Biarritz golf course, and which are, without much doubt, due to the working of water. There are, on this course, several so-called "punch-bowls." This is the golfer's name for them. They are round holes in the ground, going down, in the shape of an inverted extinguisher, to a depth, at a guess, of 30ft. I have tried to be moderate in this estimate. The greater part of the golf course on which the punch-bowls appear is at a height of some 80ft. to 100ft. or more (again at a rough guess) above the sea-level. These holes are in themselves a curious formation, and give occasion for much speculation; but what is far more extraordinary is to learn that now and then "the bottom falls out of them," so to say. For no apparent reason, a big hole will appear in a night—in an hour—at the bottom of the deepest, leading apparently to bottomless depths. It is not big enough for a man to go down, nor does the average man show the slightest ambition to go. It is big enough, however, for a golf ball, and many golf balls, to go down; so the golfing authorities, as soon as the hole appears, are at the trouble of blocking it up with turf so that it shall not swallow the balls. And not only will the bottom occasionally fall out in this way from the existing punch-bowls, but in the course of a night a new punch-bowl will sometimes appear where before there was none. On the very day of writing I have been shown one—a small one—which thus appeared. There is no reasonable doubt that these mysterious happenings are due to the agency of water. Some of the surface strata are of porous rock. We see the water coming out of the cliff at various heights, where the sheer cliff faces the sea, and coming through channels that a boy could enter. There is every reason to suppose that the water, in finding its way underground, beneath the level of the bottom of the punch-bowls, is constantly working away at the porous stuff and clearing it out. Now and then it works the rocky crust so thin that the softer strata above breaks through, and thus the "bottom falls out" of an old punch-bowl, or a new punch-bowl is created. This at least is the explanation that serves in the country. A native says that he has worked his way through a cave that the water had worn in the seaward cliff several hundred metres inland, until he could fancy that he was in the neighbourhood of one of the punch-bowls. Perhaps with a little boring, and so on, a communication between this cave and the punch-bowl might be established; but it would be quite useless, except for smuggling or novel-writing purposes. May be it was in somewhat this manner that the famous *trou terrible* in Sark was made. In any case, I hope the curious, if hazy, light that this throws on the working of water channels underground will forgive the undue length to which I feel that this letter has run.—H. G. H., Biarritz.

CATTLE AT THE FORD.

CATTLE show wonderful pluck when they are made to cross rivers, and are equally courageous when they elect to do so on their own account. In North America, which, though it has its dry regions, is largely a land of rivers, cattle are, and in old days the bison were, constantly in the habit of swimming streams to get to better pasture, and sometimes, apparently, with only the motive of the duck in the "catch," viz., "to get to the other side." They never seem in the least reluctant to swim, and do it very well, though only their heads are above water, the nostrils just keeping clear of the surface. In floods cattle are often drowned, not because they cannot swim, but because of the great difficulty they have in getting out of a swollen river if the banks are at all steep. They will enter and cross a lake with gradually shelving shores, like that in our view of cattle CROSSING THE LOCH, but they cannot clamber out if once in water with banks even a few feet high.

We have seen a cow drowned in a little river not more than a few feet deep until it joined the main stream, but with very high, steep banks. The animal got in at a shallow drinking-place, and then wandered down the stream feeding on



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CROSSING THE LOCH.

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the grass which grew at the sides. Finding itself unable to climb out, it wandered on until the water grew deeper and deeper, and was finally drowned in the deep pool where it joined the main stream of a big, embanked river. On the Nile, Sir Samuel Baker saw a herd of cows which swam the river every day above Gondokoro attacked by a hippopotamus, which seized several and dragged them below the water.